the weekly Standard

AUGUST 26 / SEPTEMBER 2, 2002 / $3.95

SPARE EMBRYOS
GILBERT MEILAENDER

IRAQ APPEASERS
WILLIAM KRISTOL • STEPHEN F. HAYES

The New, Improved SAT

by John W. Harper

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THIS IS A COMBINED ISSUE. THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE WEEKLY STANDARD WILL APPEAR IN TWO WEEKS.

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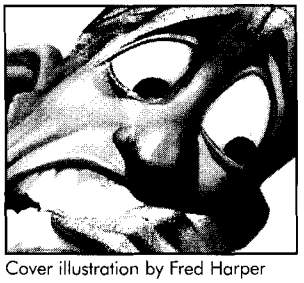

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When It Raines It Pours

There's nothing subtle about the opposition of the *New York Times* to President Bush's plan for military action to depose Saddam Hussein in Iraq. This bias colors not just editorials but practically every news story on the subject. Consider the front-page, above-the-fold piece on August 16, declaring that top Republicans "break with Bush on Iraq strategy."

True, a handful of Republicans have heartburn over Bush's intentions in Iraq—but only a handful. The list grows thin after Nebraska's Chuck Hagel in the Senate, House Majority Leader Dick Armey, and former national security adviser Brent Scowcroft. The placement of the *Times* story, though, suggests a mass repudiation is taking place. It's not—far from it.

That's the distortion part of the story. The inaccurate part involves former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, whom the *Times* names as a critic of military action against Iraq. Not so. He's an ally of Bush. Kissinger laid out much of the case for invading Iraq to achieve regime change in an August 11 op-ed in the *Washington Post*. He explicitly endorsed Bush's policy of preemption: removing a threat before it strikes. The inviolability of the nation-state is no longer the rule, he wrote: "The terrorist threat transcends the nation-state; it derives in large part from transnational groups that, if they acquire weapons of mass destruction, could inflict catastrophic, even irretrievable, damage."

That's not all Kissinger wrote. He insisted "the case for removing Iraq's capacity for mass destruction is extremely strong." He said containment and deterrence worked against the Soviet Union but "are unlikely to work against Iraq's capacity to cooperate with terrorist groups." And he said wiping out Iraq's weapons of mass destruction "would have potentially beneficent political consequences." He concluded: "The imminence of proliferation of WMDs, the huge dangers it involves, the rejection of a viable inspection system and the demonstrated hostility of Hussein combine to produce an imperative for preemptive action." Kissinger's only qualm was how Bush sells his strategy to allies.

The *Times* also added an unprofessional touch. It couldn't confirm the rumor that Secretary of State Colin Powell and his deputy, Richard Armitage, had met with Bush to air their anxieties about attacking Iraq. In fact, both the White House and State Department said they were "unaware" of such a meeting. So how did reporters Todd Purdum and Patrick Tyler get the rumor into their story? They quoted Hagel as saying it happened. Since when did Hagel become the last word on who did or didn't meet with Bush? Since last Friday in the *Times*.

A further sign of professional lapses in the service of editor Howell Raines's crusading obsessions came later that same day in Elisabeth Bumiller's dispatch from Crawford, Texas, posted on the *Times*'s website. Her story referred to "the growing chorus of concern among Republicans," repeating the paper's erroneous conceit that the "chorus" includes Kissinger. More embarrassingly, she reported that Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, had made the administration's case for a strike against Iraq "in London, where she was delivering a message aimed at tamping down European opposition."

Actually, Rice made her comments on August 1 in her Washington office, where she was interviewed by the BBC. Our advice to the *Times*: Take a break from trying to manipulate American foreign policy, and concentrate on Who, What, When, Where, and Why. ♦

Denial of Egypt

The Scrapbook notes with satisfaction President Bush's letter to Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak last week denying a requested increase in aid because of the imprisonment of pro-democracy intellectual Saad Eddin Ibrahim. It seems Cairo will have to settle for $1.9 billion from Washington this year (the aid we've delivered as promised for the past two decades under the Camp David accords), forgoing an extra $130 million it had sought. About time there were consequences for so recklessly biting the hand that feeds you.

Ibrahim, a naturalized American citizen with an American wife, has held a position at the American University of Cairo for years. He used to be something of a favorite of the regime—a dissident whose work in favor of free elections, fairness for minorities, and an end to corruption could be cited to show that Egypt was tolerant and pluralistic. Now a prisoner of conscience—at the age of 68, sentenced to 7 years for such absurd offenses as harming Egypt's image abroad—he proves the regime is nothing of the kind.

As our colleague Claudia Winkler mentioned in a piece on our website at the time of Ibrahim's sentencing ("Egypt's Sakharov," July 31), President Bush has called liberty and justice the "birthright of all people"—not just those who live outside the Middle East. It's good to see Bush taking on the massive challenge of translating this fine principle into action. ♦

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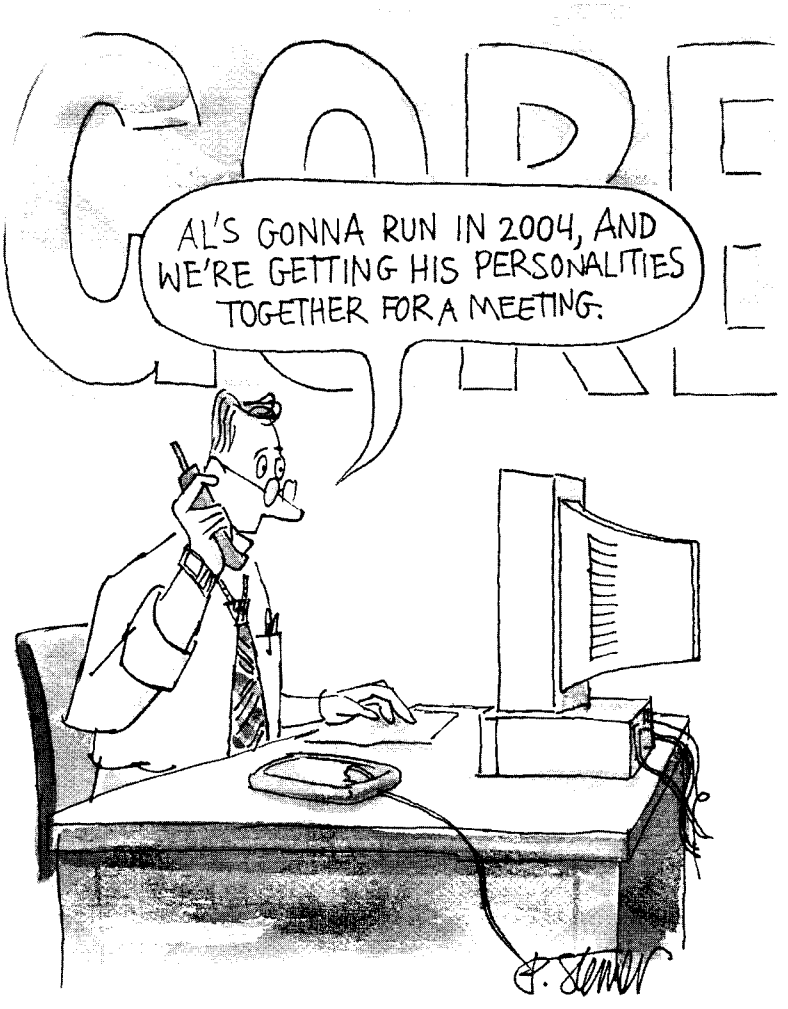

Repeat Offender

Like history, plagiarism tends to repeat itself. As readers will remember, THE WEEKLY STANDARD early this year exposed several passages in Doris Kearns Goodwin's *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys* that were either close paraphrases or direct lifts without attribution from three previous books by other authors. One case was egregious enough that Goodwin and her publisher, to head off a lawsuit, agreed to trade a laudatory paragraph of acknowledgment, 40 extra footnotes, and a "substantial" pile of cash for the aggrieved author's silence.

Goodwin offered to pull the book from the shelves and reprint a version with correct bibliographic citations, all the while assuring readers that the "mistake," as she called it, was solely a result of writing in longhand and not using the "footnote key" on a computer—a work process that she said she had changed immediately after publication of *The Fitzgeralds*.

Footnote key or no, Peter H. King reports in the August 4 *Los Angeles Times* that the same problems also crop up in Goodwin's most celebrated work, her Pulitzer Prize-winning 1994 volume *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II*. The *Times*, King reports, retained an independent researcher to check a "half-dozen or so" books cited in Goodwin's history. The researcher turned up "three dozen" suspect passages. For example:

HUGH GREGORY GALLAGHER in *FDR's Splendid Deception*: "FDR had made it a rule, during his first campaign for governor, that photographers were not to take pictures of him looking crippled or helpless. . . . It was an unspoken code, honored by the White House photography corps. If, as happened once or twice, one of its members sought to violate it and try to sneak a picture of the President in his chair, one or another of the older photographers would 'accidentally' knock the camera to the ground or otherwise block the picture."

GOODWIN: "If, as occasionally happened, one of the members of the press corps sought to violate the code by sneaking a picture of the president looking helpless, one of the older photographers would 'accidentally' block the shot or gently knock the camera to the ground."

The footnote cites the word "accidentally" as taken from Gallagher.

Goodwin's response? "There are thousands of footnotes in the book . . . and they are really good footnotes."

As for language swiped from other authors? "I took the notes," she told King. "And they were in my longhand. And then, when they got into the text, that was the mistake." The "mistake," Goodwin still insists, occurred because a researcher didn't "cross-check" the quotations with the original material, but she doesn't want to blame someone else. "That was her responsibility to cross-check it, but she didn't. But that doesn't matter. It's mine. I'm the one." So it was the researcher's responsibility to make sure she didn't plagiarize, but it was Goodwin's book? Got it. ♦

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Casual

It's Not Easy Being Green Bay

The drive from Door County, Wisconsin, where I am vacationing, to Green Bay takes about an hour. The trip is an early morning blur of taverns, cows, gas station-cheese shops, red barns, and lots of church signs. The Holy Name of Mary advertises its "Polka Mass." And in case the Devil himself cruises Highway 57, the deacons of another chapel have a message for him: "Satan, You are the Weakest Link. Goodbye."

Lucifer is nowhere to be found at 8:15 A.M. on this steamy mid-August weekday in Green Bay, although one person standing across from Lambeau Field is wearing a Chicago Bears T-shirt. Four thousand "railbirds" are vying for a view of the crisply mowed field on the other side of the chain-link fence. Ten minutes later, the police shut down a traffic lane on Oneida Street, because the fans—now ten-deep—are spilling over the curb.

Darren Gygi

It is a cliché to say that Green Bay Packers football is an obsession. It's also an understatement. The thousands of fans aren't here to watch a championship game. Or a regular season game. Or even a scrimmage. They're here for a morning session of preseason practice.

These workouts sometimes draw more fans than you'd find at a Florida Marlins home game. The Packers are expected to do well this year, but fans showed up in similar numbers throughout the '70s and '80s, when their quarterbacks threw like girls, and wins were as rare as a pregame tailgate without brats or beer.

Around 8:30 A.M., offensive guard Kevin Barry, who weighs at least 325 pounds, comes pedaling around a row of cars in the Lambeau Field parking lot. His legs splay out to the sides and his 6'4" frame overwhelms the tiny dirt bike beneath him like a circus clown on a tricycle. Standing on pegs extending out from the back axle is a little boy of six or seven years. The kid has his arms around Barry's neck—actually halfway around, because that's as far as his arms will reach. He is wearing Barry's oversized helmet, and as Barry navigates a curb, the little boy looks remarkably like a real-life bobblehead doll.

This is how most Packers travel the two blocks from their locker room to the practice field. Local kids line up—sometimes hours in advance—for the privilege of having a Packer borrow their bike. Moments later, Brett Favre, the league's only three-time MVP, rounds the corner enveloped in a running throng of several hundred kids, many of whom are trying to pat him on the back as he rides.

I can identify. Before I was two years old—not a misprint—I could recite the names and numbers of the Packers' entire starting defense. My dad had me perform this trick anytime someone new came to the house. I loved the attention and accolades that came with each recitation. I'd grab random passers-by at the grocery store and regale them with my knowledge. It was a hit, so I began using this ruse anytime I was in a rough spot. If I didn't want to eat my veggies, I'd begin listing the defensive line. It's almost a reflex. Even now, I screw up, and then it's "Jim Carter, Charlie Hall, . . ."

For some fans, training camp may be their only chance to see the Packers in the flesh. Although Lambeau Field can seat more than half the population of Green Bay, the waiting list for season tickets is 60 years long. This leads Packers fans to go to ridiculous, sometimes unhealthy, lengths to get tickets.

In January 1997, I flew to Green Bay from Washington to see the Packers play the Carolina Panthers for the NFC Championship. The wind-chill factor was thirty below zero. I wandered around the parking lot from 8 A.M. until noon, offering $350 for one ticket. While I managed several free beers, no one would part with a ticket. I watched the game at a nearby friend's house with something near $350 worth of Pabst and pizza. (An aside to Packers fans reading that last paragraph: I know you're wondering what, exactly, were the ridiculous lengths I went to for the tickets. I wore my old moon boots in public.)

Even today, I'll abandon longheld principles just to satisfy my Packers urges. Today I am committing press pass abuse. There's no actual professional reason for my presence. But with some persistence (apologies to PR assistant Sarah Koenig), I've managed to finagle on-field credentials. This is the highlight of my Packers passion and my journalism career.

There are limits, though, to what I'll do to sate my appetite for all things Packers. I wouldn't pay more than $5,000 for a Super Bowl ticket. I wouldn't fly to Japan just to see the Packers, should they ever play the annual preseason opener there. I wouldn't name my first son Cletidus.

And I would never write an embarrassing article detailing my obsession on the off-chance that a fellow junkie might read the piece and offer, say, tickets to the Packers-Jets game in New York on December 29.

Stephen F. Hayes

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It's the Regime, Stupid

The dissent of my colleague William Reinsch from the findings of the U.S.-China Security Review Commission is quoted by Tom Donnelly in "China Without Illusions" (July 29). The worst error in his dissent, I believe, is the view that "U.S. and Chinese geopolitical interests in the region will diverge regardless of what kind of government China has"—an idea which, unfortunately, has some real currency in Washington. So my thanks to Donnelly for italicizing the fundamental fact that when it comes to China, *"It's the regime, stupid."*

Assertions like Reinsch's for China were made regularly about the USSR years ago: that Russia's cultural inheritance somehow gave Moscow no alternative to building missiles, imprisoning dissenters, and maintaining an empire.

Happily, history since 1989 has disproved that claim and today's Russia, while not perfect, is certainly a great improvement. If Russia has choices so does China, and being friends with the United States is one of them.

Furthermore, suppose for the sake of argument that Reinsch is correct and our strategic interests will "inevitably" diverge. Then surely some caution is in order about China's military buildup and our contribution to it?

While calling Reinsch "a principal architect of and apologist for the Clinton administration's China and trade policies" is surely an exaggeration, readers may still find interest in a visit to the website of USA*Engage, a business-funded lobbying group (see *www.usaengage.org*). There they will find a remarkable collection of letters over Reinsch's signature objecting in various ways to sanctions against Iran, Syria, Sudan, Cuba, North Korea, and others, even including nuclear proliferators.

Arthur Waldron
Commissioner
U.S.-China Security Review Commission
Washington, DC

Mess with Texas

An item that should not go unnoticed in Terry Eastland's forceful critique of the Democratic majority on the Senate Judiciary Committee is his note that the Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate in Texas opposes Priscilla Owen's nomination to the Fifth Circuit ("The Willful Majority," August 5).

That nominee, former Dallas mayor Ron Kirk, has kept the race close so far by avoiding issue stands and touting his work on big-ticket civic projects with select members of the Dallas business community. But his donor list includes denizens of the liberal establishment such as Ted Kennedy, Tom Daschle, Bill and Hillary Clinton, and Al Gore.

Where he has been forced to articulate issue positions, he has most often taken predictably liberal ones, such as resisting business tax cuts and suggesting the repeal of "portions" of President Bush's tax cuts for individuals. Furthermore, he attacked primary opponent Ken Bentsen for pro-free trade positions.

His opposition to Owen, however, is perhaps the clearest signal yet of the forces with which Kirk would stand in Washington. Indeed, he has raised scads of money from some of the very liberal interest groups who oppose Owen's nomination, such as plaintiffs' lawyers and unions. NARAL has promised Kirk aid as well.

Given the current logjam blocking President Bush's appellate nominees, there may be no better example than this race of the principle that elections have consequences.

Conservatives across America had better pay attention to and invest in the Texas U.S. Senate race to ensure that Terry Eastland does not have to write more editorials excoriating the Judiciary Committee after November.

John Sepehri
Dallas, TX

Hitting Bottum

In his August 5 article, "U.N. Stands for Unconscionable" (August 5), J. Bottum praises Colin Powell's integrity in eliminating the U.S. contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), notwithstanding the secretary of state's strong prior support. Did it not occur to Bottum that Powell's abrupt about-face was ordered by the White House? Every other journalist in the country appears to have seen through Powell's remarkable catharsis; the real story is speculating how much longer a man with Powell's integrity can stomach being front-man to views so at odds with his personal beliefs.

Bottum continues his review by praising the administration for adhering to the principle that no support should go to an agency implicated in China's coercive population policy. Was this principle on vacation one week prior to the UNFPA decision when our Department of Health and Human Services gave $14 million to China's Ministry of Health, the agency actually responsible for implementation of China's coercive practices?

Let's dwell on this plot twist for a moment. UNFPA is defunded because it spends $3.5 million of non-U.S. funds in China trying to move the country away from coercive population control measures. Meanwhile, the administration hands $14 million over to the Ministry of Health, which is directly involved in those same coercive practices. If Bottum is correct that this is a "matter of principle," the principle guiding the administration's actions is that coercion is acceptable and worthy of U.S. support.

Moreover, while the administration claims the moral high ground in defunding UNFPA, it cannot cite one instance in which it has raised these concerns with China. The president went to China and has met with the leadership more than

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once—is there even one line in the press or other transcripts showing he raised this concern? No, there is nothing, because rather than raise a sticky issue with the Chinese, it is easier to kick around a third party—at the expense of health service for women all over the world.

Bottum concludes with a swipe at UNFPA itself, suggesting that it may not be "an admirable bureaucracy that just slipped up in China." But even the existence of a UNFPA "slip up" is questionable in this case. The administration's hand-picked investigation team could find no evidence of UNFPA's involvement in China's coercive practices and recommended a release of the embargoed U.S. contribution. Bottum omits this inconvenient fact.

The administration appears to have fallen under the spell of the GOP's religious zealots, who ironically have no moral qualms about telling lies that cost real lives.

PETER J. PURDY
President, U.S. Committee for the U.N. Population Fund
New York, NY

REINVENTING THE WHEEL

I AM GLAD TO SEE that someone is finally willing to recognize the elephant in the living room ("The Dow of Congress," August 5). But didn't James K. Glassman and John R. Lott Jr. leave something out?

The bear market didn't just begin in June or July of this year. It began long before September 11. The total decline in the market correlates with the federal government's growth in number of regulations, in size and in cost. Growth of the government has been worsened by the policies of the "compassionate conservatives" in the administration. Thanks to them, any attempt to soothe the investor now unsettles him even more.

If the Republicans in the White House and in Congress really want to create new jobs they need only end the double taxation on corporate dividends, and then leave the economy alone.

Do we have to reinvent the wheel every four years?

RICHARD DURANT
Grosse Pointe, MI

MORE KENNEDYS

MATT LABASH STATES in "The Next Kennedy" (August 5) that Kathleen Kennedy Townsend was the "only Kennedy to lose an election." However, a Kennedy did once lose a primary election—in Oregon. It was 1968, and Robert Kennedy, just a few days before his assassination in Los Angeles, lost to fellow Democrat Eugene McCarthy. One might recall the photographs of Robert Kennedy on that fateful trip jogging along the Oregon coast with his dog.

RICHARD S. MOSS
Portland, OR

THE MATT LABASH PIECE on Kathleen Kennedy Townsend was penetrating and extremely informative. One phrase, however, I found somewhat disturbing. Labash finds that Townsend "is perhaps the nicest person I've ever encountered in her line of work."

There must be some politicians out there who do not lie, cheat, and steal by trumping up a race card in order to win an election, as Townsend helped to do against Sauerbrey in 1998 and will potentially do again against Ehrlich this year if the race stays close. Surely we could do better.

WILLIAM FERRILL
Carrollton, TX

IT'S ALMOST AS IF THE WEEKLY STANDARD held a contest to find the most unflattering cover image of Kathleen Kennedy Townsend—and Zak Pullen won (August 5). The caricature needlessly cheapened Matt Labash's fine writing.

JOHN ZINZI
Olean, NY

NOT A SAUDI FRONT

I WRITE TO CORRECT the erroneous characterization of the Middle East Institute found in Stephen Schwartz's August 5 article, "Held Hostage in Riyadh."

In an offhand phrase, Schwartz refers to the institute as a "Saudi lobbying front." All three words of this description are incorrect.

First, the institute is not in any sense or manner Saudi. We are an American membership organization, founded in 1946 by George Camp Keiser, an architect, and Christian Herter, who went on to become secretary of state. Our staff includes WASPs, along with African, Italian, Arab, and Jewish Americans. We are multicultural, perhaps, but we are not Saudi.

Second, MEI does not lobby. Indeed, our charter explicitly forbids us from taking positions on matters of U.S. policy. We are a 501 (c)(3) charitable educational organization. We host a 25,000-volume research library and scholars-in-residence, teach Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish to 400 students annually, publish a peer-reviewed scholarly journal, and host lectures and conferences on politics, economics, and social trends in the Middle East from Morocco to Pakistan.

Finally, MEI is a front for no individual, country, or interest. We enjoy financial and personal support from Americans, Israelis, and Arabs. Our simple aim is to fulfill our mission of improving understanding between all the peoples of the Middle East and the West.

It is unfortunate that THE WEEKLY STANDARD so thoughtlessly printed such a grossly erroneous description of a venerable American institution.

TAMARA COFMAN WITTES
Director of Programs
The Middle East Institute
Washington, DC

• • •

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the weekly Standard

The Axis of Appeasement

"Leading Republicans from Congress, the State Department and past administrations have begun to break ranks with President Bush over his administration's high-profile planning for war with Iraq."
New York Times, *August 16, 2002*

Wait a minute. "Leading Republicans from . . . *the State Department* . . . have begun to break ranks with President Bush"? Isn't the State Department part of the Bush administration? How can its "leading Republicans"—Colin Powell and his deputy, Richard Armitage—"break ranks" with the president they work for?

Let's be clear. President Bush's policy is regime change in Iraq. President Bush believes that regime change is most unlikely without military action. He considers the risks of inaction greater than the risks of preemption. No doubt he and his administration could have been doing a better job of making that case in a sustained and detailed way. But that is not why an axis of appeasement—stretching from Riyadh to Brussels to Foggy Bottom, from Howell Raines to Chuck Hagel to Brent Scowcroft—has now mobilized in a desperate effort to deflect the president from implementing his policy.

The appeasers don't want the president to do a better job of explaining his policy. They don't *agree* with his policy. They hate the idea of a morally grounded foreign policy that seeks aggressively and unapologetically to advance American principles around the world. Some, mostly abroad and on the domestic left, hate it because they're queasy about American principles. Some, mostly foreign policy "realists," hate it because they're appalled by the thought that the character of regimes is key to foreign policy. Some, cosmopolitan sophisticates of all stripes, hate talk of good and evil. Now they've come together in a last-gasp attempt to stop President Bush from setting American foreign policy on a course of moral clarity and global leadership.

The establishment fights most bitterly and dishonestly when it feels cornered and thinks it's about to lose. Churchill was attacked more viciously in 1938 and 1939 than earlier in the decade. So now the *New York Times* shamelessly mischaracterizes Henry Kissinger's *endorsement* of the president's policy as breaking ranks—when in fact it represents an acknowledgment by the most intellectually honest of the "realists" that realism, post 9/11, requires rethinking concepts like deterrence and preemption. And now Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska wanders into Pat Buchanan-land with his comment that "maybe [Richard] Perle would like to be in the first wave of those who go into Baghdad." And now Brent Scowcroft (writing in the *Wall Street Journal*) thinks that a persuasive *casus belli* would be "compelling evidence that Saddam *had* acquired nuclear weapons capability." But as Henry Kissinger said in a television interview last week, "if there is no action now, that means that we are saying, we will wait until these weapons are used and react to an actual provocation. That is going to produce, if it comes, horrendous casualties."

Reading the Scowcroft/*New York Times* "arguments" against war, one is struck by how laughably weak they are. European international-law wishfulness and full-blown Pat Buchanan isolationism are the two intellectually honest alternatives to the Bush Doctrine. Scowcroft and the *Times* wish to embrace neither, so they pretend instead to be terribly "concerned" with the administration's alleged failure to "make the case." Somehow, Vice President Cheney's fine speech in San Francisco on August 7 (see below), or Condoleezza Rice's superb August 15 interview with the BBC, to say nothing of Donald Rumsfeld's impressive press briefings and President Bush's strong statements—these don't count.

But of course the problem with the administration has nothing to do with Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, or Rice. The problem is with the leading Republican in the State Department. Where is Colin Powell? The secretary of state is the lead spokesman for American foreign policy. *This* secretary of state, because of his popularity at home and his stature abroad, could be particularly helpful if he were to join the president, the vice president, the national security adviser, and the defense secretary in making the case for the Bush Doctrine with respect to Iraq. Instead, he allows

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his top aides to tell the *New York Times* on background that he disagrees with the president and is desperately trying to restrain him. And according to the *Washington Post*'s Jim Hoagland, he complains privately that his boss is uninterested in foreign policy. When told that previous secretaries of state had an hour alone every week to talk foreign policy with the president, Powell is reported to have asked, "But what would I do with the other 55 minutes?" Well, what he could do is spend those minutes figuring out how best to execute the president's policy—or he could step aside and let someone else do the job.

Colin Powell is an impressive man. He is loyally assisted by the able Richard Armitage. They are entitled to their foreign policy views. But they will soon have to decide whom they wish to serve—the president, or his opponents.

—*William Kristol*

Dick Cheney on Iraq and the War on Terror

Excerpts from the vice president's address to the Commonwealth Club, San Francisco, August 7, 2002.

The attacks of 9/11 confront us with a whole new set of considerations—from our ongoing vulnerability to international terrorism, to the possibility that terrorists will gain access to weapons of mass destruction. In the rubble of Afghanistan we've found confirmation, if any were needed, that bin Laden and the al Qaeda network are seriously interested in nuclear and radiological weapons, and in biological and chemical agents.

It's one thing to have that sort of possibility discussed in foreign policy seminars. It's quite another to have in your hand documents clearly describing their aspirations and plans for acquiring these capabilities, so that they can use them against the United States and our friends and allies around the world. In the case of Saddam Hussein, we have a dictator who is clearly pursuing these capabilities—and has used them, both in his war against Iran and against his own people.

In the words of a recent editorial in the *Economist*, "wishful thinking in the face of mortal danger is bad policy." And as President Bush has made very clear, the government of the United States will not look the other way as threats accumulate against us.

Every significant threat to our country requires the most careful, deliberate, and decisive response by America and our allies. As all Americans now understand, the struggle for our freedom and security is proceeding on different fronts, engaging the economic, diplomatic, intelligence, and military resources of the United States. There will be times of full and sustained combat action, as in Afghanistan. There will be other, quieter times, when success comes without need of military force. But at all times, at every turn, we will press on, because the stakes could not be greater. Deliverable weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists would expose this nation and the civilized world to the worst of horrors. And we will not allow it. We will not live at the mercy of terrorists or terror regimes.

More than sixty years ago, in the early stages of World War Two, General George C. Marshall made a pledge on behalf of the nation that resonates very well in our time. "Before the sun sets on this terrible struggle," he said, "our flag will be recognized throughout the world as a symbol of freedom on the one hand, and overwhelming power on the other."

At the beginning of this new century, the United States is again called by history to use our overwhelming power in defense of freedom. We have accepted that duty, because we know the cause is just, we understand that the hopes of millions depend on us, and we are certain of the victory to come. The President and I are mindful of the tremendous responsibilities that have been placed in our hands. And we are grateful to you, our fellow citizens, for giving us the opportunity to serve the greatest nation on the face of the earth. . . .

* * * * *

From the Q & A

QUESTION: If Iraq agrees to international weapons inspections, would we call off the war—or not move forward in that effort?

VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY: Well, let me emphasize that the President has not made a decision at this point to go to war. We're looking at all of our options. It would be irresponsible for us not to do that. But the issue here isn't inspectors. That's a secondary item, if you will. The issue is the fact that he's required to dispose of his weapons of mass destruction and the inspectors are merely the device by which the international community can assure itself that he's done so.

So many of us I think are skeptical that simply returning the inspectors will solve the problem. A great deal depends upon what conditions they would operate under; would they be able to go anywhere, any time, without notice on extensive searches? You've got to remember he's had about four years now to hide everything that he's been doing, and he's gotten to be very good at that, worked at it very aggressively. So even if you had the return of inspectors, I'm not sure they would be able to do enough to be able to guarantee us and our friends in the region that he had, in fact, complied. He's gotten very good at denial and deception.

But we do know, as I say, from defectors and from other sources, that he continues to have robust programs, and a debate with him over inspectors is simply—I think would be an effort by him to obfuscate and delay and avoid having to live up to the accords that he signed up to at the end of the Gulf War. ♦

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Saddam's Arsenal

Yes, the Iraqi dictator has weapons of mass destruction. BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

LAST WEEK, in an interview with BBC radio, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice called Saddam Hussein "an evil man," and warned of dire consequences "if he gets weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them."

If?

USA Today's John Diamond, in a report of the interview that ran on the front page, wrote: "U.S. intelligence cannot say conclusively that Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction," and the resulting "information gap is complicating efforts to build support for an attack on Saddam's Iraqi regime." The paper claimed that Rice "was careful not to say that Iraq currently possesses chemical, biological or nuclear arms," and suggested that a "sense of uncertainty" about Saddam's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) "is influencing Bush's preparations for a major effort to sell his Iraq policy this fall."

So, was this indeed a calculated attempt by the Bush administration to soften its claims that Saddam already possesses weapons of mass destruction?

No. Rice's comments were part of an interview she gave the British radio network for a documentary commemorating the first anniversary of September 11. The discussion of Iraq was a small part of that larger conversation, and not intended as a newsmaker.

"She was specifically referring to the means to deliver weapons of mass destruction," says an administration source. "We don't know how good his means of delivery are. But we know he's got the weapons of mass destruction."

Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Rice and other administration officials have repeatedly referred to Saddam's possession of weapons of mass destruction as the source of the Iraqi threat. In early July, for example, Rice gave a blunt assessment of the Iraqi threat in an interview with an Italian newspaper in which she spoke only of the weapons, not the means of delivery. "The one thing that is clear," she said, "is that the status quo is unacceptable because it permits Saddam to possess weapons of mass destruction." Interesting that those comments didn't find their way across the Atlantic onto the front pages.

The case that Saddam already possesses such weapons, and that he's not reluctant to use them, is overwhelming. Indeed, to argue that Saddam is merely "intent on developing" weapons of mass destruction—the favorite phrasing of those who argue that Saddam is "bottled up"—one must disbelieve a mind-boggling number of reports from highly credible sources that suggest the Iraqi dictator already has them.

There are several indisputable facts about Saddam's history with weapons of mass destruction. Saddam built an extensive biological and chemical weapons arsenal. He used chemical weapons on the Kurds in 1988. He shocked inspectors twice with the advanced state of his nuclear program, once after the Gulf War and again when his son-in-law defected to Jordan in 1995. He devised an elaborate concealment program to thwart the efforts of U.N. weapons inspectors. Despite those efforts, the U.N. found and destroyed vast quantities of chemical and biological weapons, and significantly degraded his nuclear program.

The inspection regime was little more than a seven-year game of high-stakes hide-and-seek, with Iraq repeatedly denying it retained weapons of mass destruction and then feigning surprise when inspectors discovered a cache. Richard Butler, who headed the inspection team in its last two years, details the charade in his compelling book, *The Greatest Threat: Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Crisis of Global Security*. While no one can say for sure just how extensive Saddam's arsenal was when inspectors were withdrawn in 1998, there is little doubt that he retained weapons of mass destruction.

To believe that Iraq is clean today, then, requires an assumption that Saddam chose unilaterally to get rid of all of his remaining weapons of mass destruction *after* inspectors left. While that notion is absurd on its own, it is even more preposterous when one considers that Saddam thinks his WMD arsenal prevented his demise at the end of the Gulf War. Charles Duelfer, the highest-ranking American inspector on the U.N. team, put it this way: "Why would Saddam say, 'This stuff saved my ass one time, but oh yeah, you're right, this isn't moral. I'll stop'?"

A succession of Iraqi defectors who left after the inspectors were withdrawn in 1998—some more credible than others—have confirmed Saddam's continuation of his WMD programs. Last fall, Adnan Ihsan Saeed al-Haideri, an Iraqi civil engineer who fled the country, told U.S. intelligence officials that he had worked at nearly two dozen of Saddam's biological and chemical weapons facilities under the auspices of Iraq's Military Industrial Organization. He provided those officials with detailed accounts of the operations—including descriptions of storage facilities designed to look like water wells—and reported that a major task was to make weapons facilities impenetrable from the outside and leak-proof from the inside. In one case, he even produced a contract that his company signed with the Iraqi regime. He told the *New York Times*'s Judith Miller that he worked on a biological weapons

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facility in Waziriya, which he said, "was near the Mercedes dealer." Al-Haideri said he was told to wear a protective work suit before entering the facility.

In the months after September 11, after a brief pause for bipartisanship, Democrats began to criticize the Bush administration for failing to predict and prevent those attacks. The condemnations came following revelations that an FBI field office had raised questions about Middle Eastern men taking flight lessons and that the National Security Agency had failed to translate, until September 12, two Arabic messages: "Tomorrow is zero hour" and "The match begins tomorrow." These messages, the administration should have known, meant that terrorists on September 11 would use box cutters, knives, and then airplanes to kill thousands of Americans. House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt went so far as to invoke the Nixon-era cliché, wondering aloud what the president knew and when he knew it.

Imagine the outcry, then, if inaction results in more lives lost. The Iraqi threat is well defined and, for more than a decade, has been clear to anyone paying attention. Despite reports to the contrary, the Bush administration appears to be paying attention. ♦

Our Real Friends in Europe

To find them, start at the old Iron Curtain and go east. BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

THE EUROPEAN UNION has just warned any country hoping to join the E.U. that it had better not make any arrangements with the United States promising not to extradite Americans for trial at the new International Criminal Court in The Hague.

The ICC is Europe's pet project for bringing justice and truth to the world. Its origin is the experiment in war crimes trials for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, two places where the Europeans stood firmly in repose while the massacres raged. (They raised not a finger against Serbia until the United States entered the fray and carried the fight.)

Europe now wants to generalize this soothing balm of bringing bad guys to court post facto. Hence the invention of a permanent International Criminal Court. Prosecutors in The Hague can now pursue soldiers, commanders, or political figures from anywhere in the world for whatever "crime against humanity" they fancy.

This presents a real problem for the United States. Americans do not dislike courts. We respect law. If anything, we are the most over-lawyered, judge-driven democracy in the West. (We are the only Western democracy, for example, to have legalized abortion not through popular or parliamentary vote, but by court fiat.) Nonetheless, we hold to the quaint idea that in a democratic system, prosecutors must be answerable to democratically elected leaders. The ICC has nothing like our system of checks and balances and review. Once the ICC judges and the prosecutors and the lawyers get the machinery going, they essentially have carte blanche.

We got a taste of runaway prosecution four years ago when a Spanish judge nabbed Augusto Pinochet on a medical visit to England and had the former Chilean dictator detained for months on human rights charges. Fidel Castro happened to have been in Portugal at precisely the same time. He was not arrested. Surprise! It would not have occurred to the Spanish judge to charge him for the blood on his hands. That is not how European human rights politics works. The prosecutions are selective. And the prosecutions are political. Tomorrow, some grandstanding prosecutor will try to cuff Henry Kissinger for Vietnam, George Bush Sr. for the Gulf War, or maybe even Gen. Tommy Franks for the conduct of the Afghan war.

But beyond the hypocrisy is the issue of responsibility. We have a legal system in the United States for punishing crimes committed by Americans. These laws apply to crimes committed by Americans abroad, even in military uniform. Our code of military conduct is particularly strict. We don't need European prosecutors who answer to no one running around the world putting American soldiers in jail and forcing them to defend themselves on whatever charge the human rights activists of the day find convenient.

That is why last month we had a big fight with the Europeans at the U.N. We said we would not continue to expend money and personnel on peacekeeping if American soldiers were going to be subject to trial before the ICC. We threatened to terminate the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Bosnia altogether unless Americans were granted an exemption. The Europeans refused. The Bush administration decided that the eve of an Iraq war was not the best time to go to the mat on this one. So it chose to temporize and punt. It accepted a one-year exemption.

In anticipation of the expiration of the year, however, the administration has gone to more friendly countries seeking bilateral agreements not to extradite Americans to the ICC. On August 1, Romania was the first to sign up. (Israel quickly followed suit.) That piqued the pique-prone Euro-

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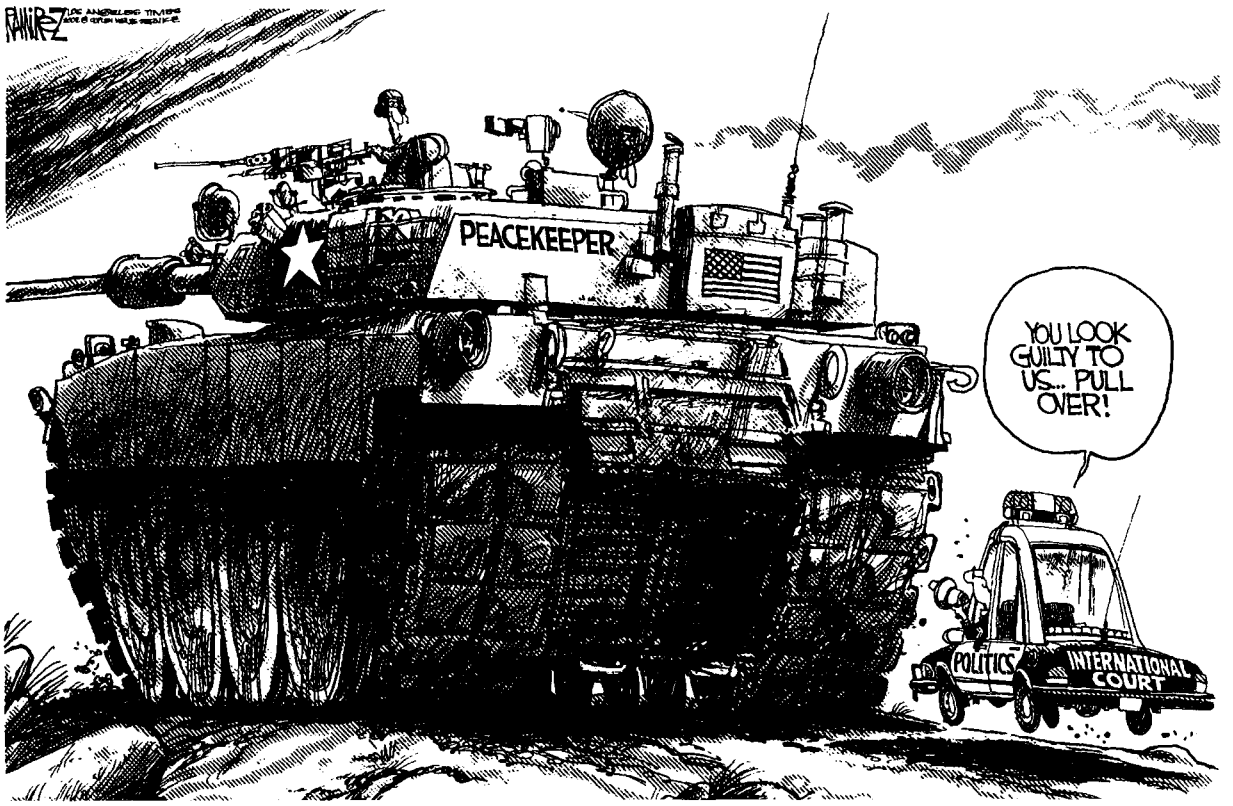

Michael Ramirez

peans. First, the European Union expressed "regret" over Romania's action. Then, on August 12, European Commission president Romano Prodi issued a warning to "other candidate countries which have also been approached by the United States" not to "make any more moves to agree to sign such an accord." The "candidate countries" being mostly poorer Eastern European countries whose economic future lies with acceptance into the tariff-free club of rich West Europeans, the warning carries weight.

The ironies here are stark. The East Europeans are poor and the West Europeans are rich precisely because one side had the protection of the United States during the Cold War and the other side did not. The military umbrella, economic aid (beginning with the Marshall Plan), and other goodies dispensed by the United States permitted Western Europe to become the island of wealth that it is today. Having achieved that wealth on the back of the United States, Western Europe is now using it as a club to make Eastern Europe distance itself from the United States.

The irony gets richer, though. The West Europeans have been full throated in their complaints about the American "hyperpower," the arrogant unilateralist that uses its power to get other countries to do its bidding. Now, however, finding itself with the upper hand vis-à-vis its eastern cousins, the E.U. has not the slightest hesitation about threatening their economic futures, which are necessarily tied to the E.U., to ensure that Americans remain subject to extradition and prosecution for their exertions abroad.

This is not the first time that Western Europe has threatened its Eastern European cousins to shape up and do as they do. Six months ago, the prime minister of the Czech Republic said some very true and therefore necessarily rude things about Yasser Arafat. Among other observations, Milos Zeman said that Arafat was a terrorist and that Israel should not be forced to negotiate with him. Zeman was a little ahead of his time. The United States has by now said precisely the same thing. But for that, and for the indiscretion of comparing Arafat to Hitler and Palestine to the Sudetanland, Zeman incurred the wrath of the E.U.

"Such language is not what we expect from a future member state," declared the European Union in a not so subtle message that if you want to join the club you had better parrot the club's prejudices. By May, the Czechs were apparently on board. After a Brussels meeting with Zeman, E.U. foreign policy chief Javier Solana declared with satisfaction that the Czech Republic had aligned itself with the E.U.'s Middle East policy.

It is no accident that Romania should have wanted to sign on with the United States on the ICC or that the Czech Republic would have expressed a position on the Middle East more in accord with the American than with the West European view. It is perhaps the greatest irony of the post-Cold War era: America's closest friends in the world are those nations that were once Soviet colonies. We can count far more on the goodwill and support of former Warsaw Pact countries than on our longtime West European allies (with the occasional exception of Britain).

The reason is not hard to see. East Europeans retain a residual pro-Americanism that derives in part from gratitude for America's half century of struggle to end their enslavement to Moscow. Whatever gratitude Western Europe might have had for its liberation 50 years earlier has quite dissipated.

But it is more than just a question of gratitude. East Europeans have the immediate, almost current, personal experience of having lived under tyranny. They have a much keener

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appreciation of the value of liberty, the price that must be paid to sustain it, and the role of the United States in securing theirs and everyone else's.

West Europeans, after half a century under the American umbrella, have come to believe that their freedom is self-generated. It is by now, they feel, a simple birthright, as natural as the air they breathe. When they see the United States slaying dragons abroad—yesterday Afghanistan, today Iraq, tomorrow who knows who—they see a cowboy whose enthusiasms threaten to disturb the perfect order of things, best symbolized, of course, by the hushed paper-shuffling at the International Criminal Court.

The East Europeans suffer none of these illusions. They emerged from the Cold War chastened and realistic and, above all, acutely aware of the power and presence of evil. The West Europeans, having been spared that history, make dialogue with evil their mission. They seek accommodation—and lucrative oil contracts—with the Iranian mullahs, the chief sponsors of terrorism around the world; they make the case for Iraq, first for lifting sanctions, now for preventing American-led regime change; and more generally, they advocate a "nuanced" and "sophisticated"—*surtout pas trop de zèle*—approach to international miscreants.

Except for Mexico's Vicente Fox, the only world leader to have been given a formal state dinner by this administration was the president of Poland. Some thought this odd. On the contrary, it was a perfectly pitched acknowledgment of the new reality in Europe—of where America can today expect to find real friends as the war against the new totalitarians and the new barbarians grows more intense and more dangerous. I was at that state dinner. Looking around the room, I noted to a friend of mine on the absence that night of the rancor and animosity that we have come to expect from the West Europeans. "Imagine how many real friends we'd have in the world today," he observed wickedly, "if we'd let the Soviets have Western Europe for fifty years too." ♦

The Prof Who Can't Count Straight

And the journalists who cite him.

BY JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

THE TALIBAN MAY BE DEAD, but its propaganda lives on in the European and Middle Eastern press—thanks in part to the tireless machinations of one hard-left professor at the University of New Hampshire and to the willingness, nay, eagerness, of some of our foreign "friends" to believe the worst about America.

On December 10, Marc Herold, an associate professor of economics and women's studies, released a "dossier," claiming to have "documented" 3,767 civilian deaths in the American air campaign in Afghanistan. The count is updated daily in a database on the web (*www.cursor.org/stories/civilian_deaths.htm*). Herold's claims have been little reported in the United States because journalists—at least those who work for what Herold contemptuously calls the "mainstream corporate media"—have been skeptical of his peculiar methods of counting. But outside this country, his statistics continue to receive credulous respect.

In mid-July, the center-right *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, arguably Germany's most respected newspaper, commented that in contrast to U.S. government reticence on the subject, "a study published in January by the University of New Hampshire speaks of nearly 4,000 civilians killed since October 2001. Since then, the number is said to have reached 5,000 victims. This would mean more people have been killed in Afghanistan than through the attacks in NY on Sept. 11." The same comparison was drawn in *Der Spiegel* some months back, and that magazine recently reiterated Herold's claims.

In Britain, the *Guardian* called Herold's work "a systematic independent study . . . based on corroborated reports," while a *Times* story headed "'Precision Weapons' Fail to Prevent Mass Civilian Casualties" cited the 4,000 figure sympathetically. The BBC reported Herold's conclusions and described his methodology in terms that make it sound highly credible. Bolstering Herold's claim that his was a "very conservative estimate," the network explained that "when there were different casualty figures from the same incident, in 90 percent of cases Professor Herold chose a lower figure."

In France, *Le Monde Diplomatique* carried a long essay by the American journalist Selig Harrison characterizing Herold's work as based on "meticulously gathered evidence on the ground from relief workers and journalists." Harrison returned to the subject in a piece in the *International Herald Tribune*, this time calling Herold's count "a credible University of New Hampshire study." Still closer to home, Canada's leading national newspaper, the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, reported Herold's numbers as well as those of Human Rights Watch and Reuters—which were less than one quarter as large—but commented that those organizations' "monitoring has been less rigorous" than Herold's.

Perhaps of greater consequence, Herold's work has been enthusiastically embraced in the Muslim world. *Islam Online* recites Herold's death count as if it were an established fact,

Joshua Muravchik, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of Heaven on Earth: The Rise and Fall of Socialism *(Encounter).*

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and Egypt's leading daily, *Al-Ahram*, reports that while "the Pentagon has falsified the facts about its war . . . one American academic is setting the record straight."

What is this report that has commanded so little attention here and so much abroad? Herold's "dossier" begins with this:

> When U.S. warplanes strafed . . . the farming village of Chowkar-Karez . . . on October 22-23rd, killing at least 93 civilians, a Pentagon official said, "the people there are dead because we wanted them dead." The reason? They sympathized with the Taliban.

I tried to follow these three sentences to their evidentiary bases, and soon I felt like Alice chasing the rabbit down the hole. The above passage is graced with a footnote explaining that "the figure of 93 comes from our data compilation." This is none too helpful but is followed by a note in parentheses: "see chart later, citing reports from Al Jazeera, the BBC, *Dawn* (November 1, 2001) and the *Hindu*." Alas, there is no chart.

So I began to search. Al Jazeera—the Qatar-based satellite TV network—did indeed report the 93 civilian deaths, but the only stories in the *Hindu* (an Indian daily) or the BBC that I could find via Nexis and Google were about a Human Rights Watch report on the incident. Human Rights Watch, a liberal group aiming to hold Washington's feet to the fire, concluded that "at least 25, and possibly as many as 35, Afghan civilians died" in the village. *Dawn* is an English language Pakistani newspaper. Its search engine yielded nothing for November 1, but did turn up a story from October 31, also about the Human Rights Watch report.

Herold's footnote had alluded to this report: "Human Rights Watch reported a figure of 35 deaths, but this was based only upon interviews with survivors in a Quetta hospital." This dismissal is odd since even if HRW's sources were limited

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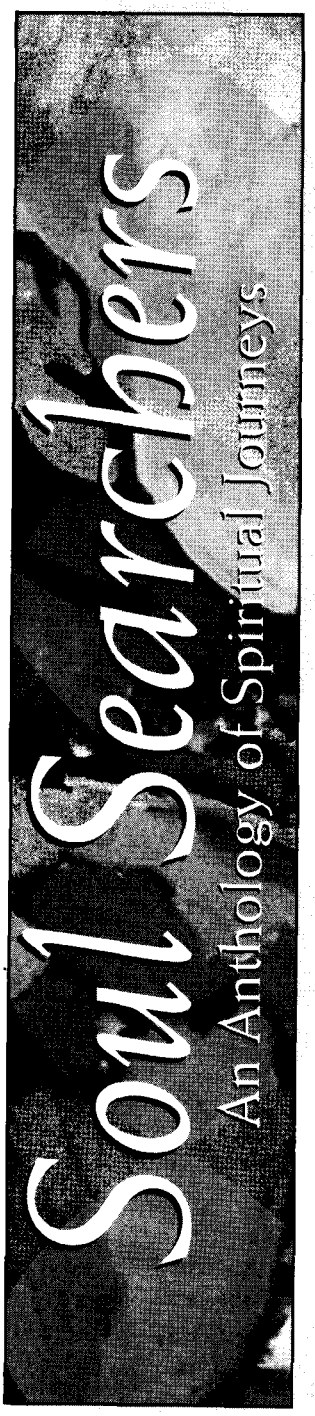

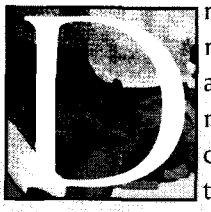

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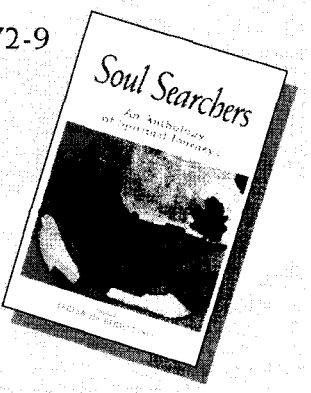

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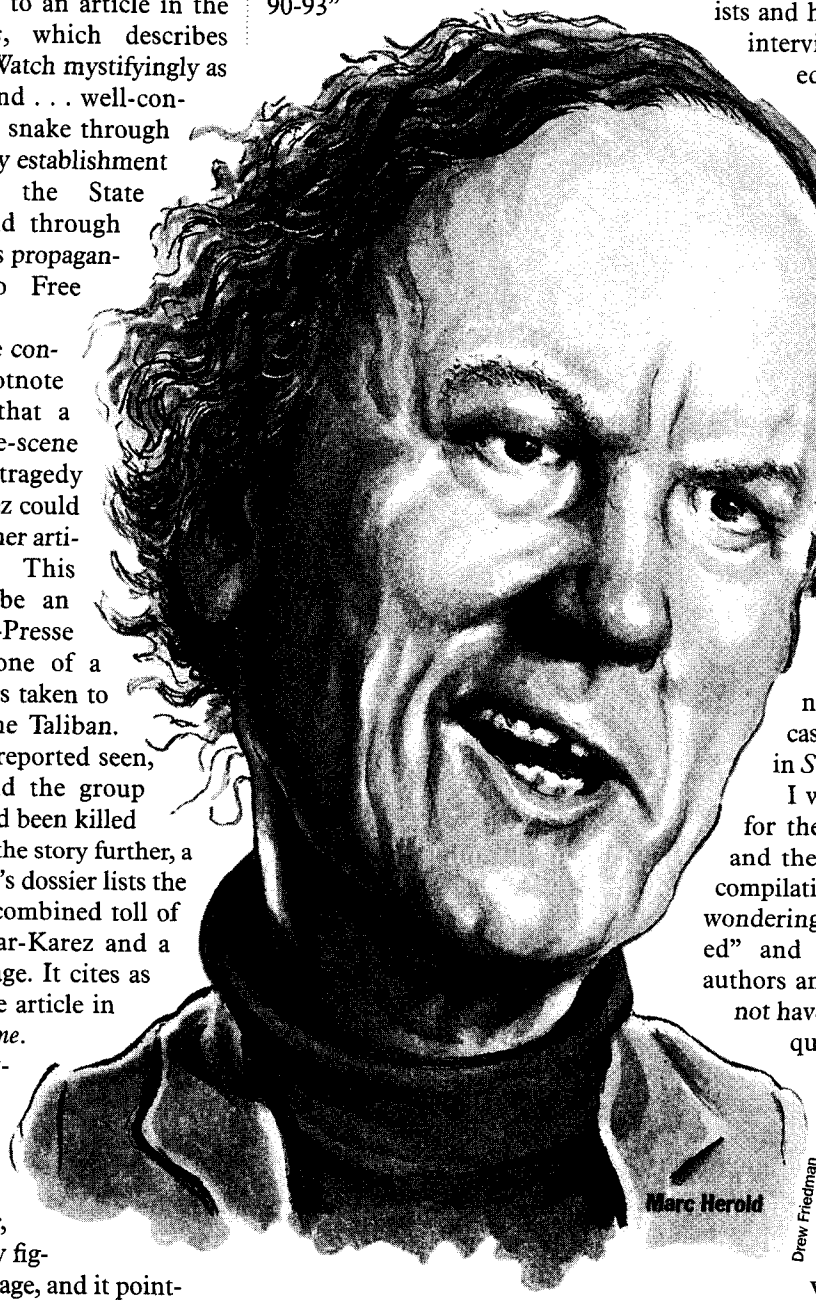
to the hospital, it had conducted the only systematic investigation of what happened in the village. Moreover, as Herold must have known, Human Rights Watch made clear that its sources included more than the Quetta patients. To buttress his impugnment of HRW, Herold's footnote referred readers to an article in the webzine *Swans*, which describes Human Rights Watch mystifyingly as "well-funded and . . . well-connected. Its links snake through the foreign policy establishment . . . , through the State Department, and through the government's propaganda arm, Radio Free Europe."

Adding to the confusion, the footnote also mentions that a "detailed on-the-scene account" of the tragedy at Chowkar-Karez could be found in another article in *Dawn*. This turned out to be an Agence France-Presse dispatch from one of a group of reporters taken to the village by the Taliban. No bodies were reported seen, but villagers told the group that 60 people had been killed there. Muddling the story further, a sidebar in Herold's dossier lists the figure 93 as the combined toll of raids on Chowkar-Karez and a neighboring village. It cites as its source a single article in the *Chicago Tribune*. That article, however, mentioned only the neighboring village, not Chowkar-Karez. Moreover, it gave no casualty figures for either village, and it pointed out that "reports [of civilian casualties] could not be independently verified."

So I e-mailed Herold, copying his footnote and asking "what chart?" He replied: "I am not quite sure which text you are quoting." He added that his death estimate for the village was now 52 to 93 and referred me to his "massive database" on the web (*www.cursor.org/stories/casualty_count.htm*).

There I found a table with an entry for Chowkar-Karez (now spelled Kariz) listing "52-90-93" as the count of civilian deaths. Seven sources were given. The BBC and the *Hindu* were no longer mentioned, but in addition to Al Jazeera and *Dawn* (now up to three separate articles), there were references to *Singapore News*, the *Independent*, and Agence France-Presse. For all but Al Jazeera, dates were given, but in no case was there an author or title. So it was back to the search engines.


Marc Herold
Drew Friedman

I found the piece in the *Independent*. It reported that Al Jazeera claimed there had been 93 deaths, and it also said that "journalists and human rights advocates who interviewed eyewitnesses estimated 25 to 35 civilians were killed." The Agence France-Presse item at least served to explain where the number 52 had come from. It said: "The Taliban . . . also reported that . . . 52 people died when a village . . . was attacked. None of these claims have been independently confirmed." The newly referenced item in *Dawn* only mentioned civilian casualties in general—no numbers and nothing about the specific case. I could not find anything in *Singapore News*.

I wrote Herold again, asking for the sources I could not find and the method of his own "data compilation." He began his reply by wondering "why you are so interested" and said his failure to give authors and titles was because "I do not have a staff to assist." My other questions about sources and methods went unanswered, but he appended a brief text, explaining that its "purpose . . . is to cast doubt upon both the method and reported results of Human Rights Watch." It cited new sources: the *Oman Daily Observer*, *Al-Ahram*, the *Hindustan Times*, the *Jordan Times*, and the BBC Online. The only piece I could find in the BBC Online was one citing Herold's own account. I could not find the others through Nexis or Google or the search

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engines of the individual papers. Presumably they repeat the same unverified assertions that have appeared elsewhere.

Herold provided no further information. He e-mailed that he had learned I am a neoconservative and therefore answering my queries did not justify "the opportunity cost of my time. . . . I 'owe' you absolutely nothing." To top it off, he accused me of "dissimulation" in signing my e-mails to him, Josh Muravchik. "I wonder why you did not 'sign' your full name (Joshua Muravchik)," he wrote, suggesting that by omitting the "ua" I had slyly cloaked my identity.

Although stymied, I have looked into the episode enough to feel certain that these other stories, if they exist, will add no new information. There were, in sum, essentially four versions of civilian casualties at Chowkar-Karez. The Taliban's initial claim was 52 dead, which was upped by Al Jazeera to 93. Human Rights Watch put it between 25 and 35. Then there was the Pentagon, which claimed that Chowkar-Karez had been "positively identified as a Taliban encampment including al Qaeda collaborators." (This was the description that Herold paraphrased as "civilians [who] sympathized with the Taliban.")

From these four versions, Herold concluded that the toll was 52 to 93, in other words, the Taliban version and up. Indeed, this is the "method" for all his research. Notwithstanding reports from Afghan journalists after the Taliban's ouster that under its rule they were forced to doctor reports of civilian casualties ("We could not tell the truth," one told AP), Herold's "dossier" contains a graph whose civilian casualty count, for every week of the war, exceeds Taliban claims.

The White House is reportedly considering setting up a new communications agency. It might begin by offering classes to Europeans (and Selig Harrison) on the elementary canons of journalism and scholarship. And someone might tell the state of New Hampshire how its name is being used and how its children are being taught. ♦

Leaving Many Children Behind

Congress passes Bush's education reform, and school districts ignore it. BY CHESTER E. FINN JR.

WHILE THE SUPREME COURT may have recently affirmed the constitutionality of school choice, states and districts across the country are doing their level best to undermine what few options are presently available to children in failing schools. Despite a new congressional mandate that youngsters enrolled in failing "Title I" schools may exit for other public (and charter) schools, many such children continue to be neglected.

When Congress overhauled the Title I program last year in the "No Child Left Behind" Act, it included an important provision: If a "Title I" school fails for two straight years to make adequate progress toward its state's academic standards, the local school system must provide its pupils with "public school choice" and may use some of its federal dollars to pay for the transportation.

In President Bush's original formulation, a student's choices included private schools and public schools in other districts. But Congress instantly balked at "vouchers" and the White House surrendered. Then the education establishment successfully pressed lawmakers to confine children's options to public schools within the same district. Hence Chicago children have no right to enroll in Winnetka's excellent schools nor Los Angeles youngsters in those of Beverly Hills. Their choices are limited to schools run by their present systems (and charter schools within district boundaries).

That does not do much for students in faltering systems that abound in failing schools and boast few good ones. But once the lobbyists were finished, that's as far as Congress would go. Except for one wrinkle that was barely noticed when the bill was signed in January: The school-choice provision applies right now—today, school year 2002-3—to more than 8,600 Title I schools that have *already* lingered for two years or longer on their states' lists of education failures.

School districts across America were staggered to learn this summer

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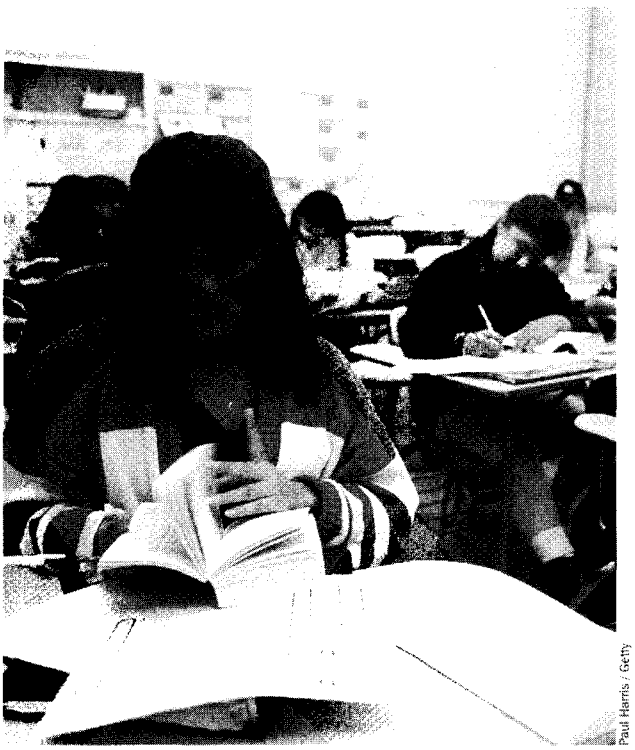
that they must immediately provide public school options for those millions of youngsters.

How are they responding? A handful are behaving as they should. District of Columbia superintendent Paul Vance doesn't like this provision—he fears it will "drain" the abler students from the weaker schools in his troubled system—but is nonetheless seeking to clear 2,000 slots for youngsters transferring from the city's 15 worst-performing schools. "The law is the law," he told the *Washington Post*. "My job is to implement it."

Across the nation, however, many states and districts are resisting this school-choice requirement, deferring until it's too late for kids to switch, ignoring the law entirely, or reinterpreting it in ways that suit them. Thus *Education Week* reports that "relatively few students will parachute out of low-performing schools this fall."

Many stratagems are at work to frustrate the new federal rule. In a matter of weeks, Ohio whittled its list of failing Title I schools from 760 to 212—not by improving the others but by fiddling with test scores and criteria. Rural South Carolina districts decided that they have so few schools that there's really nothing to choose among—and it's too much bother and expense to send youngsters to schools operated by nearby districts (which the law mandates in such situations "to the extent practicable"). Kentucky has decided to wait until mid-September to finalize its list of eligible schools. George W. Bush's Texas is holding off until the end of August. By then, of course, the school year will be well underway in those two states and fewer families will want to move their children.

In some cases, it's not clear whether the district's meager response is due entirely to foot-dragging or to genuine problems of capacity. Los Angeles is pleading overcrowded schools. In Baltimore, where 30,000 children are enrolled in failing schools, the district says it has just 200 openings in better ones. In Chicago, a staggering 125,000 kids in 179 schools were originally deemed eligible to transfer but the system has somehow cut that list to 50—and is now "pairing" them with other schools rather than giving students a full range of options. (It says that all 179 schools will get extra help with tutoring and suchlike.) Vance's Washington, D.C., is providing pupils with four alternative schools, but has excluded many of the District's highest-performing elementary schools.


Paul Harris / Getty

Los Angeles schools are pleading overcrowding.

Notwithstanding such shenanigans, thousands of youngsters are changing schools under the new federal requirement, even in such upscale places as Montgomery County, Maryland. Denver estimates that almost 5,000 students will leave their neighborhood schools, though some are choosing other low-performing schools. (Down the interstate in Colorado Springs, principals of exit-eligible schools wrote personal letters to parents pleading with them not to leave.) And some families are making these moves for reasons having more to do with playgrounds and personalities than academic achievement. "It's hard to quantify why they picked what they picked," remarked the head of Denver's Title I program.

When all is said and done, it's just a few thousand poor children, not millions, who are succeeding in escaping bad schools for better ones this fall, never mind the No Child Left Behind Act. Mainly what we're seeing is widespread flouting of the law's intent—and a federal government that can do little to make resistant school systems change their ways. Though the Bush administration has revived its interest in school choice—filing an important Supreme Court brief in the Cleveland case and proposing tax credits for school expenses—its Education Department has few enforcement tools at times like this. Nobody is about to cut off Title I funds to districts that dawdle over school choice. In fact, No Child Left Behind authorizes the withholding only of a smidgen of *administrative* money from states and districts that do not fulfill its mandates. Nor do any rewards—save perhaps in Heaven—await those that conscientiously provide solid alternatives for their students.

What we're really seeing, once again, is how the public education establishment despises school choice, how little it will bestir itself to assist poor families to gain access to better schools, and the hardball tactics it deploys to keep lawmakers from adding more exit doors.

The lesson: Congress can paste whatever label it wishes on its shiny new statute, but when it entrusts a choice program to the same people who brought us 8,600 failed schools in the first place, it leaves millions of children behind. ♦

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A First Class Flight to Bankruptcy

Don't bail out the airlines.

BY IRWIN M. STELZER

WEEP NOT FOR BANKRUPT US Airways, or soon-to-be-bankrupt (so it says) United Airlines. They are not victims of the disruption of air traffic after September 11. Their difficulties began long before *jihadists* turned airplanes into missiles. Greedy unions, inept management, flawed government policies, and—perhaps most important—a secular change in the market have combined to increase the flow of red ink to levels that threaten the ability of many major airlines to survive as they are now structured.

And don't worry too much about the effects of bankruptcy on your ability to fly from one place to another. Bankruptcy does not mean that a major airline is grounded. Indeed, the purpose of the bankruptcy laws is to permit the carrier to continue operating while it sorts out its finances, as Continental and America West have done in the past. Travelers dependent on bankrupt USAirways have experienced no service disruption so far, although the longer-run prospects for undiminished service are less certain.

Start with the situation at United. It is difficult to tell whether the carrier truly feels that bankruptcy is around the corner, or is using the threat of a Chapter 11 filing to wring concessions from its unions and a bailout from the government. United has asked the government for a $1.8 billion loan guarantee to back a private loan of $2 billion. Either because it doesn't want to get into the bailout business, or because it believes that United's $2.4 billion of cash and $3.4 billion in unencumbered assets provide it with sufficient resources to repay the $875 million in debt coming due in the final quarter of this year and the $150 million due early next year, the government has signaled that it won't provide the guarantee. Which comes as a relief to United's competitors, who are lobbying furiously to prevent the government from making funds available to the troubled carrier.

Besides, the government is unwilling to ride to the aid of the airline unless it gets its labor costs under control, which it has been unable to do in part because it is 55 percent owned by the workforce from whom major concessions would have to be wrung. The Association of Flight Attendants has rejected management's request for a 5 percent pay cut, and the International Association of Machinists has refused the company's plea to lower wages for ramp workers, mechanics, and gate attendants by 10 percent. Only the astronomically paid pilots have agreed to some salary reductions, but those are "wholly insufficient to secure approval for a government loan guarantee," says Sam Buttrick, an analyst for UBS Warburg. United probably needs an across-the-board 10 percent pay cut from all its unions if it is to avoid bankruptcy.

The focus of most analysts has been on the problem created for major carriers by the failure of traffic to return to pre-September levels. Which it certainly hasn't. Continental reports that traffic in July was 8.6 percent below year-earlier levels. The drop at Delta is 6.6 percent. And American Airlines is down by a whopping 9.7 percent during what is supposed to be a peak summer travel season. American has responded by laying off 7,000 workers and curtailing some of its schedule.

But more important than any temporary adjustments to recession-induced loss of traffic is the fact that American has begun to question the entire premise on which it and other major airlines have based their business model. After fares and routes were deregulated, the big carriers decided that the future lay in developing hub-and-spoke systems. They would funnel passengers into giant hubs—Dallas (American), Denver (United), Houston and Newark (Continental), Chicago (American, United), and Atlanta, Cincinnati, and Salt Lake City (Delta)—and then route them out on conveniently scheduled connecting flights.

They soon discovered that this necessitated a two-tier pricing policy. Time-sensitive business travelers (who can't postpone meetings scheduled for today because air fares might be lower tomorrow) are charged fares high enough to cover a grossly disproportionate share of the airline's fixed costs. Non-business travelers are offered deals at prices that cover a bit more than the marginal cost of carrying them, and in return live with restrictions on when they might fly—the famous Saturday-night stay-over requirement being only one of several such restrictions.

But after a period of prosperity in the booming 1990s, black ink turned to red. The cost of maintaining the hubs proved to be higher than anyone thought, since to make connections convenient it is necessary to schedule in-bound and out-bound flights close together, causing congestion and requiring large numbers of gate attendants and other employees to service the virtually simultaneous landings and takeoffs.

The high fixed costs of the major carriers make shutdowns virtually unthinkable. (Lease payments on airplanes continue whether the craft are

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in the air or idling in hangars.) Realizing this, the unions saw an opportunity to drive wages up, and without striking. Merely by "working to rule" the unions could and did wreak havoc with schedules, irritate airline customers, and get congressmen to put pressure on managements to cave in.

Costs rose. So did fares charged to business customers. But the gap between what businessmen are being asked to pay and what travelers in the back of the plane are paying has become so large that even the most price-insensitive customers are stepping to the rear of the plane.

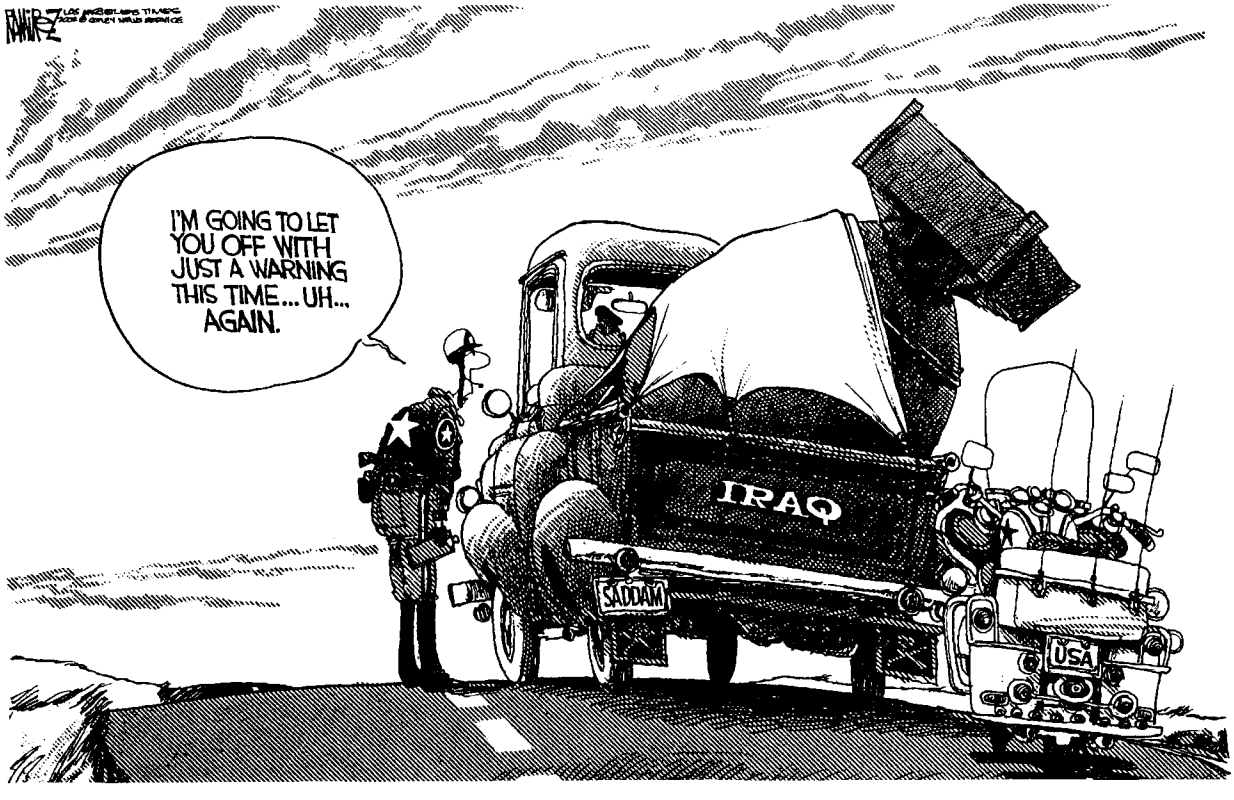
Worse still from the hub-and-spoke carriers' point of view, new start-up airlines are modeling themselves on profitable Southwest Airlines. Tighter seating; peanuts if you're lucky; use of secondary airports such as Baltimore and Providence; quick aircraft turnarounds; and flexible workforces that check you in, load your bags, and move from job to job and gate to gate, drive costs and, therefore, fares down. And by so much that the inconvenience is more than offset by the savings, persuading more and more potential full-fare passengers of the major carriers that being squeezed between two backpackers is worth the savings.

A New England businessman heading to a meeting in Washington, D.C., can fly from Southwest's Providence airport to its Baltimore airport (about an hour from downtown Washington), and return, for $168. Or he can use USAirway's somewhat more convenient Boston (Logan) and D.C. (Reagan National) airports, and pay $555 for a coach-class seat. If it's first-class-or-nothing, he can fly on United from Logan to Dulles (about as far from downtown Washington as is Baltimore), and pay $1,105 to stretch his legs during the 90-minute flight.

These differentials are simply unsustainable. And not just on domestic flights. When Virgin Atlantic Airways lowered its round-trip, London-New York business-class fare from $7,624 to $2,999, Continental and United had to follow suit.

All of which is forcing the major carriers to begin what may prove to be the unwinding of the hub-and-spoke system. American has decided to increase the time passengers funneled into its hub have to wait for connecting flights. By making connections at its hubs less convenient, American reduces the number of planes arriving and departing at any one time, cutting congestion (and wasted fuel) and the number of ground staff required to service its planes.

Alfred Kahn, best known as the father of airline deregulation, says that we may be witnessing a secular change every bit as important as the one that created the hub-and-spoke system. The major carriers are facing "the progressive unwillingness of people to pay the price of very convenient scheduling," and to pay front-of-the-plane fares high enough to cover the major carriers' fixed costs. This means that the airlines are doomed to have less cash available with which to pay investors for their capital and workers for their labor. So much less, that the equity of some carriers will be wiped out, the creditors will take what Wall Street calls "a haircut," and the unions will find their contracts rewritten by a gimlet-eyed bankruptcy court judge. "The world has changed," Jack Creighton, United's interim chairman and CEO, told the press. Indeed it has. ♦



Michael Ramirez

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The New, Improved SAT

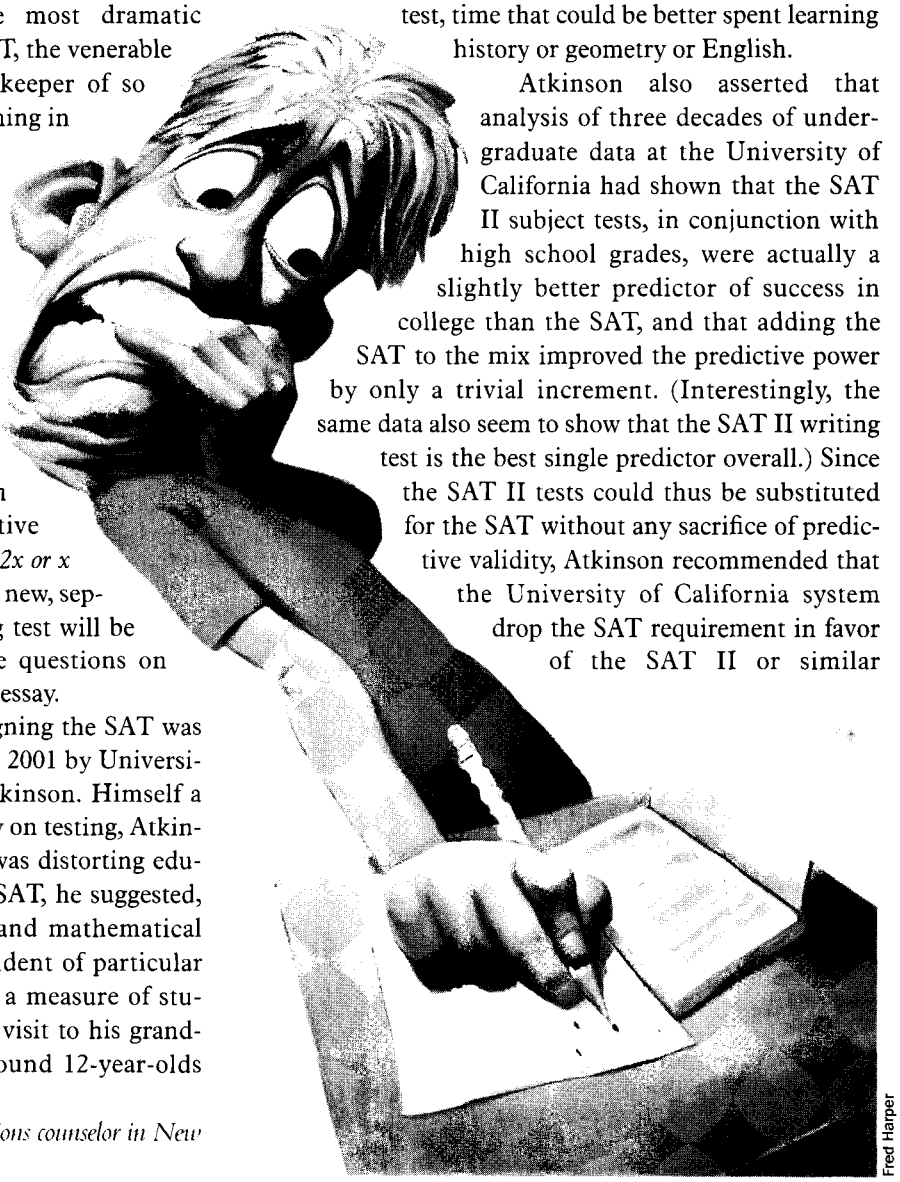
Surprisingly, the revised college admissions test is better than the old one.

By John W. Harper

In late June, the trustees of the College Board voted unanimous approval for the most dramatic changes in the history of the SAT, the venerable admissions test that is a gatekeeper of so many American colleges. Beginning in March 2005, the analogy questions that have tormented test-takers since the first SAT in 1926 (*untruthful is to mendacious as circumspect is to cautious*, etc.) will be abolished. In their place will be more reading comprehension questions, similar to those that already make up most of the verbal test. The math section, which now tests arithmetic, geometry, and basic algebra, will add problems from advanced algebra, while the quantitative comparison questions (*which is greater, 2x or x squared*, etc.) will be dropped. Finally, a new, separately scored 50 or 60 minute writing test will be added, consisting of multiple choice questions on grammar and usage and a handwritten essay.

The immediate impetus for redesigning the SAT was the attack on the test launched early in 2001 by University of California president Richard Atkinson. Himself a cognitive psychologist and an authority on testing, Atkinson charged that the use of the exam was distorting educational priorities and practices. The SAT, he suggested, though intended to measure verbal and mathematical reasoning ability or aptitude independent of particular courses of study, in reality was more a measure of students' test-taking skills. Recounting a visit to his grandchildren's private school where he found 12-year-olds already being drilled weekly on SAT-type analogies, Atkinson argued that students were wasting valuable time inside and outside the classroom preparing for the test, time that could be better spent learning history or geometry or English.

Atkinson also asserted that analysis of three decades of undergraduate data at the University of California had shown that the SAT II subject tests, in conjunction with high school grades, were actually a slightly better predictor of success in college than the SAT, and that adding the SAT to the mix improved the predictive power by only a trivial increment. (Interestingly, the same data also seem to show that the SAT II writing test is the best single predictor overall.) Since the SAT II tests could thus be substituted for the SAT without any sacrifice of predictive validity, Atkinson recommended that the University of California system drop the SAT requirement in favor of the SAT II or similar



Fred Harper

John W. Harper is a private tutor and admissions counselor in New York City.

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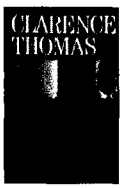

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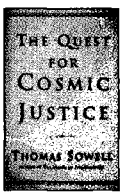

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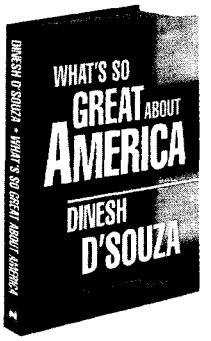

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New York Times Best-Seller

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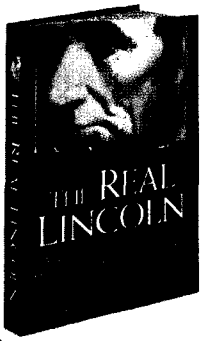

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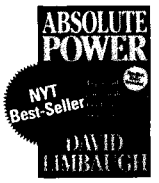

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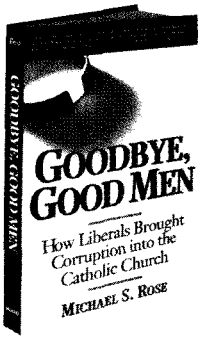

Goodbye, Good Men

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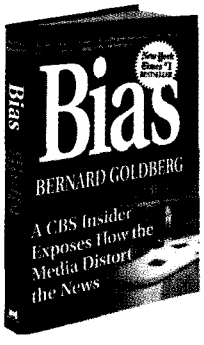

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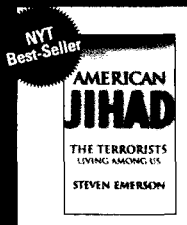

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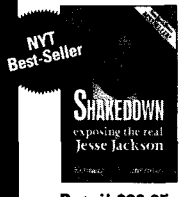

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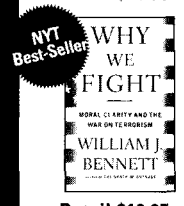

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achievement tests assessing mastery of specific college-preparatory subject matter.

Atkinson's bombshell was front-page news. Losing the University of California as a customer would have been a severe setback for the authority and predominance of the SAT—perhaps a fatal one. Indeed, several liberal opponents of standardized testing gleefully predicted that California's defection would prove to be the beginning of the end for the "Big Test." To many conservatives, on the other hand, Atkinson was not a hero but a villain. They suspected him of attempting an end run around Proposition 209, which had banned racial preferences in California's public colleges and universities.

On this view, liberal egalitarians were bent on killing the test because it stood in the way of achieving a politically correct ethnic mix on campuses; the attack on the SAT was the vanguard of an attack on all standards of merit. In truth, some of Atkinson's statements lent support to these suspicions. He did argue that the SAT was unfair or perceived as unfair to minorities and that it devastated the self-esteem of otherwise accomplished people; and he did plead in the long run for a less test-driven, "more holistic, more comprehensive" evaluation of candidates. (And, independent of the SAT controversy, recent University of California admissions preferences for those who have suffered various hardships or "life challenges" strike some critics as so selectively awarded as to constitute backdoor affirmative action.) But in hindsight it is clear that both liberal and conservative responses to Atkinson tended to fixate on the issue of abolishing the SAT, while ignoring his central demand: to replace aptitude tests with tests of achievement.

Though the College Board initially reacted to Atkinson's attack with incredulity—President Gaston Caperton sputtered that dropping the SAT from college admissions would be like dropping grades—after reflection, the test-makers settled on a shrewder strategy of reforming the exam in order to preserve it. While it has never really been a pure test of aptitude or native intelligence independent of prior schooling (if a student has not learned basic algebra and geometry, no amount of aptitude will get him through the math), the SAT is nevertheless a direct descendant of early twentieth-century IQ tests, and has long been at pains to distinguish itself from its controversial ancestor. A gradual shift away from characterizing the exam as a test of intelligence or aptitude has been evident for many years. As the author David Owen has observed, "intelligence" has been a "dirty word" among the test-writers, "IQ" an "obscenity"; and in recent years, "aptitude has become almost as unmentionable as IQ."

Accordingly, the name "Scholastic Aptitude Test" was officially discarded in 1993, and the College Board now weirdly insists that "SAT is not an initialism; it does not stand for anything." (Likewise, the deliberately uninformative terms "SAT I" and "SAT II" now obfuscate a once clear distinction between tests of aptitude and tests of achievement.) Bringing this trend to a culmination, the College Board has essentially met Atkinson's challenge by recasting the SAT as an out-and-out achievement test of college preparatory reading, writing, and math. Since Atkinson now says he is "delighted" with the College Board's reforms, the SAT seems to be safe for the foreseeable future.

And the new SAT will be a better test than the current one, in several respects. Most important, it does not lower standards, it raises them. With the addition of a writing test and problems from second-year algebra, students will have to know more and do more. The new test will even last half an hour longer than the current three hours. How this new test, therefore, could be of use to anyone who seeks to weaken standards for the sake of racial preferences or "diversity" is hard to see.

Despite what Atkinson and other critics often charge, the current SAT is not racially biased, even though "underrepresented" (i.e. non-Asian) minorities do receive significantly lower average scores. But since the point of the SAT is to predict success in college, lower scores would constitute bias only if the test predicted poorer college grades than these minorities actually receive. In fact, as William G. Bowen and Derek Bok (proponents of both affirmative action and standardized testing) observe in their 1998 book, "far from being biased *against* minority students, standardized admissions tests consistently predict higher levels of academic performance than most blacks actually achieve." (Though seldom acknowledged in public debate, this "overprediction mystery" is familiar to psychometricians; the other side of the coin is that the SAT underpredicts the college performance of most Asians.) At any rate, given the racial sensitivities involved, not the least of the new curriculum-based test's advantages will be that it is unequivocally not a test of IQ or innate ability. If under the new exam minority scores continue to lag, it will be obvious that the reason is not that the SAT is a racially biased intelligence test but that the public schools are simply failing to give minority students the skills necessary for success in college.

As Atkinson's argument implies, at least two issues must be considered in the choice of a college admissions test. First, what kind of students does the test choose? And second, how does the test shape the

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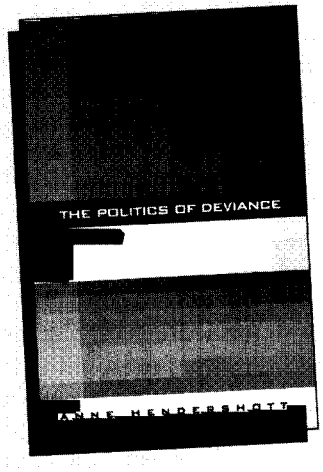
education of those who take it? If it is inevitable that students will try to prepare for the test and that high schools will try to teach to it, the second question is no less important than the first. And here the new SAT is clearly superior.

If what is tested inevitably becomes what is taught, far better to have an admissions exam that reinforces the curriculum rather than undermines it or distracts from it. The current SAT diverts students' time and attention away from real learning to analogy drills, memorization of vocabulary, and sterile test-taking skills. It also devalues the high school curriculum, given the paramount importance that students and parents rightly suspect colleges place on the SAT. (Former Dartmouth assistant director of admissions Michelle Hernandez reports in her 1997 book that, contrary to the official line of virtually everyone, admissions committees are much more impressed by high SAT scores than by all A's on a high school transcript. "It used to surprise me that even the Director of Admissions would make excuses for students with extremely high scores [and B grades]. . . . 'With those scores I bet Caroline was just bored with her classes and her teachers. . . .' You would never hear the same argument for someone with a number-one rank and all low 500 scores. . . . I cannot overstate the importance of standardized testing, despite what admissions officers might tell you.")

Making the SAT a straightforward test of achievement in reading, writing, and math will send an unmistakable message about what is most important to colleges. Of course, the current SAT II tests already measure achievement (as do the advanced placement exams), but since only the most selective colleges require them, the great majority of students never take them. If the goal is to alter the incentives confronting all college-bound students, there is no better way than by reforming the SAT.

As for the other issue raised by the choice of admissions test—what kind of students are selected—one must ask: Even if the new test will be as good as or better than the old one at predicting success in college, will nothing valuable be lost in the break with aptitude testing? The classic rationale for an admissions test of aptitude rather than achievement is that it sifts out "diamonds in the rough": bright, promising students who have gone to mediocre high schools but who could flourish at a good college.

The Politics of Deviance
by Anne Hendershott



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WHATEVER HAPPENED TO DEVIANCE?

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In *The Politics of Deviance*, Anne Hendershott, herself a leading sociologist, discusses this major change in the way we see the world. How did we "medicalize" what was once proscribed behavior? How did pressure groups assume a central role in changing our views of behavior that was once taboo? Why do we now romanticize the transgression of "border crossers"?

In examining issues such as mental illness, drug addiction, teenage sexual promiscuity and pedophilia—and the groups working to redefine the way we view them—Hendershott shows the politics of deviance at work. Arguing against the grain of her own discipline, she shows how definitions of deviance based on reason, not political advocacy, are indispensable to sustaining cultural values and reaffirming the moral ties that bind us together.

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This was the rationale of James Bryant Conant, the president of Harvard who in 1934 made the fateful choice to adopt the original SAT for admissions testing of scholarship students, and later persuaded other Ivy League schools to do the same. A self-described "American radical," Conant held that the essence of American democracy was the denial of the doctrine of hereditary privilege. But he was no egalitarian. An ardent believer in Thomas Jefferson's natural aristocracy of virtue and talents, Conant wanted to revolutionize not just Harvard but American education and American society by overthrowing the artificial aristocracy of wealth. (Convinced that genuine equality of opportunity required not just upward but downward mobility, Conant was, in his own phrase, "lusty in wielding the axe against the root of inherited privilege"; to the dismay of many Harvard men, he publicly favored a 100 percent inheritance tax.)

For Conant, it was essential that the scholarship boys who would spearhead the transformation of Harvard into a bastion of the natural elite be chosen without any regard to wealth or family, but solely on the basis of academic merit. And that merit, Conant insisted, could not be accurately measured by achievement tests, because those were manipulable by the rich. Performance on achievement tests is heavily affected by prior preparation and schooling. True merit, Conant held, was basic aptitude or intelligence, because that alone was untainted by artificial privilege. And Conant chose the SAT as his gateway test because he was persuaded that it was a genuine test of aptitude.

Contrast Conant's vision of the SAT as the great equalizer of opportunity with the very different reality of the exam today, and particularly the vast and expanding test prep industry. Though the College Board continues to assure parents and students that coaching for the SAT produces only meager gains—on average, just 26 points (out of a possible 1,600) more than the 43-point gain to be expected from simply taking the test again—the public apparently does not believe it. Around $100 million a year, by some estimates, is spent on test preparation materials and services, including those peddled by the College Board itself, now playing both sides of the street. Is it possible that all this money is spent in vain?

In New York, where the competition to gain entry to elite colleges seems to have reached an unparalleled frenzy, the typical private school student now prepares for the SAT by studying one-on-one with a private tutor. Tutors with a reputation for eliciting significantly higher scores can command fees of hundreds of dollars an hour. The most successful such tutor in the city currently charges $565 for 50 minutes (most tutors get a lot less) and has all the work he can handle. For families who can afford it, total fees to prepare one student for the SAT can amount to several tens of thousands of dollars. (Comparable sums are spent on professional admissions counselors to "package" the student and supervise the applications; the current market leader in New York charges a flat fee of $28,995.) And, despite what the College Board would have people believe is possible, parents are not paying all this for only modest increases. Score gains in the range of 100 to 300 points—enough to make a difference at Princeton or Duke or Berkeley—are expected and more often than not accomplished.

However things may have worked in the past, the reality that higher SAT scores can now readily be bought makes a mockery of the equal-opportunity case for aptitude testing. Conant was wrong: Either the SAT was not and is not an aptitude test, or aptitude tests can be coached for, or both. "Diamonds in the rough" are now more likely to be among the losers, those who cannot afford coaching or who continue to believe the myth that since it is supposed to be an aptitude test, you really cannot study for it.

Competition under the new SAT will be fairer, at least in that everyone will know that the college entrance exam is an achievement test and that the best preparation truly is studying hard in a demanding high school and reading and writing as much as possible. Still, as long as there is unequal access to excellent college preparatory schools, equal opportunity as Conant conceived it will not be realized. Coaching will continue under the new SAT, since parents naturally want to give their children every possible advantage. But by calling attention to the deficiencies of so many public schools, the new test should at least fuel pressure for the reforms (including school choice and vouchers) necessary to rectify or ameliorate them.

Indeed, short of a second Sputnik, it is hard to think of a single event or innovation that could do more to enlist the interested efforts of students, parents, and high schools on behalf of more rigorous standards. When the SAT begins to test writing, especially, parents will insist that schools do much more to teach it, and as a result colleges may soon see fewer freshmen for whom standard written English is practically a foreign language. And at least in one key respect, the new writing test will become an indispensable equalizer: Since application essays nowadays are increasingly edited, if not ghost-written, by professionals, the writing sample will provide colleges with invaluable evidence of exactly what the candidate can do without assistance. All in all, then, the new SAT must be seen as an advance for educational quality and equal opportunity. ♦

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Spare Embryos

If they're going to die anyway, does that really entitle us to treat them as handy research material?

By Gilbert Meilaender

In our ongoing national debate about the use of human embryonic stem cells for research, there is one compromise position that reappears with regularity and attracts relatively wide support. This position proscribes (at least for federal funding) any research on stem cells derived from embryos produced solely for research purposes, while permitting research on stem cells derived from embryos that were produced but are no longer needed for use in infertility treatments. (I am not here referring to a different sort of compromise struck by President Bush in his speech of August 2001. He permitted funding for research on embryonic stem cell lines only if the evil deed of embryo destruction had already been done but not for cell lines derived from embryos destroyed in the future—thereby seeking to permit some research to go forward without providing an incentive for further destruction of embryos.) Because spare embryos are destined to be discarded in any case—because, that is, the decision of those with legal authority over the embryos has been to discard them—they have no future life prospects. They are destined to die, and the only question is how. Why not, one might wonder, gain some useful knowledge from their dying?

This compromise approach is not without appeal, and it has a distinguished pedigree. It was, for example, specifically endorsed by the National Bioethics Advisory Commission in its 1999 report on "Ethical Issues in Human Stem Cell Research." The commission recommended that research on stem cells derived from spare embryos remaining after infertility treatments be eligible for federal funding but that, at least for the present, such funding not be permitted for research on stem cells derived from embryos that had been produced solely for research purposes.

This is a thoughtful compromise and in certain ways attractive. At the very least, it seems less crass than simply endorsing embryo research without limits. Perhaps some support the compromise solely for strategic reasons—as a first step but not, they hope, the last step in embryo research. But for others it may demonstrate a praiseworthy inclination to "shudder" just a bit in the face of a routinized use of nascent human life that any full-fledged program of embryo research would certainly involve. Nevertheless, appealing as this mediating position is in certain respects, we should not too quickly endorse it; for the pedigree of this sort of reasoning is actually more mixed and troubling than we usually realize. Consider the following three examples:

In the mid-1970s Congress established a National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. This commission, which proved to be fairly influential, examined and issued reports on a number of difficult topics in the ethics of human experimentation. The first of its reports, issued in 1975, was "Research on the Fetus." With certain safeguards, the commission was prepared to approve research on the fetus *in utero* and on the possibly viable infant outside the uterus, but if the research was not aimed at benefiting the research subject himself or herself, the commission required that it impose "minimal or no risk" or "no additional risk" to the well-being of the fetus or infant.

Having agreed on that, the commission also had to consider possible research on the fetus still living in the womb *but intended for abortion* (that is, destined to die) or on the child still living outside the womb after abortion *but nonviable* (and, hence, destined to die). The commission eventually recommended that these possible research subjects be given equal treatment. They too should not be subjected to research that imposed more than minimal risk or any additional risk to their well-being. It is instructive, however, to remind ourselves that several of the commissioners argued that "equal respect" could mean something quite different for a fetus-to-be-aborted or for a still living but nonviable child outside the womb after abortion. In those cases, these commissioners suggested, one cannot impose any additional risk

Gilbert Meilaender is a member of the President's Council on Bioethics. The views expressed here are his own and do not represent the council.

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of harm or further diminish the life prospects of these potential research subjects. They are going to die; the only question is how. They may simply die, or they may be used as research subjects in the course of their dying. In the latter case, so the argument went, we do not treat them unequally or respect their lives less. On the contrary, we apply exactly the same principle ("no additional risk of harm") that we apply to other research subjects. In this instance, however, because they are destined (as a result of someone's choice) to die soon anyway, we can—without further diminishing their life prospects or imposing upon them additional risk of harm—use them as research subjects in ways that we would never use fetuses or infants who were not destined to die. "Bombs away," as a student of mine once put it.

A second example may be yet more troubling. Perhaps the most well-known instance of research gone horribly awry in this country is the Tuskegee syphilis experiment. For approximately forty years officials of the U.S. Public Health Service used impoverished, uneducated black men in Macon County, Alabama, as subjects in a project designed to study the effects of untreated syphilis. The subjects were left untreated even after penicillin was known to be effective in the treatment of patients with syphilis. We miss some of the complexity of the case, however, if we forget that the poverty, illiteracy, and race of these men meant that, even if the research were not undertaken, they almost surely would not have gotten treatment. The circumstances of their lives destined them to suffer from and perhaps die of complications resulting from syphilis.

Public Health officials were not in a position to change those circumstances. Carrying out their research would neither diminish the life prospects of these men nor impose upon them any additional risk of harm. Why not, therefore, at least gain from their plight knowledge that might benefit future sufferers? In *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment*, James H. Jones describes such a mode of reasoning (referring in particular to the view of Dr. Taliaferro Clark, but with, it is clear, wider reference to the motives of the researchers generally): "The fate of syphilitic blacks in Macon County was sealed (at least for the immediate future) regardless of whether an experiment went forward. Increasing the store of knowledge seemed the only way to profit from the suffering there." Nothing is lost and something potentially of medical significance is gained. Why not proceed?

A third example is, if anything, more thought-provoking still. When prisoners arrived at a concentration camp such as Auschwitz, "selections" were made that determined the life prospects of those prisoners. Many were fated to die. Discussing the way in which doctors at Auschwitz were "hungry for surgical experience," Robert Jay Lifton writes: "In the absence of ethical restraint, one could arrange exactly the kind of surgical experience one sought, on exactly the appropriate kinds of 'cases' at exactly the time one wanted. If one felt Hippocratic twinges of conscience, one could usually reassure oneself that, since all of these people were condemned to death in any case, one was not really harming them."

The justification is striking. We have met it before. By virtue of decisions others had made, these victims had no life prospects. Hence, they could not really be harmed if subjected to experiments that would never have been carried out on people not destined to die. Why not, then, gain useful medical knowledge and thereby wrest some good from tragic circumstances? It is crucial (and terrifying) to remember that the doctors of whom Lifton writes were, in many cases, ordinary people—like us—who supposed themselves to be advancing the mission of medicine.

Here, then, are three examples of reasoning that is structurally similar to the reasoning often used to defend the mediating position that permits research only on "spare" embryos. I do not say that those who argue for research on spare embryos should be equated with the Tuskegee researchers, or the Nazi doctors, or even moralists who were willing to apply exactly analogous reasoning not (let us note) to five-day-old blastocysts but to well-developed fetuses and newborn but nonviable infants. (Neither, on the other hand, do I seek to relieve the conscience of anyone who may be bothered by the similarities in argument.) I simply ponder these examples as a way of wondering whether we need to slow down the train of this conversation and think again. The compromise—research on spare embryos but no others—has its appeal. But perhaps we ought to worry about it more than we do. Are there reasons to question the appeal of this approach? I think there are.

We should notice, just for starters, that the form of the argument essentially baptizes the current practice of in vitro fertilization in this country—a practice that is, we might note, almost entirely unregulated. The argument simply accepts, for example, the routine creation of spare embryos. No doubt this practice eases the burden on those who seek IVF to overcome infertility, but there is no reason why their burden should necessarily be of greater moral concern than the production of spare embryos destined to be discarded. It seems unlikely that our society will—very soon—decide to rein in and rethink its IVF practices, and proponents of embryo

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research sometimes act as if one cannot oppose it without demanding far-reaching IVF regulation. As a tactic, of course, this is intended to stifle opposition to embryo research by requiring its opponents to bear the burden of arguing for rolling back practices now widely used. But, of course, there is no reason why we should not tackle our problems one at a time. The fact that we cannot start over and immediately construct our IVF practices in a morally better and more regulated manner does not mean that we need proceed farther down the road on which we are traveling. It may be moral progress simply to stop, even if we cannot for now turn back.

Moreover, the fact that these are spare embryos remaining after infertility treatments may actually turn the argument in quite a different direction. These embryos have already been used once in the service of someone else's project. Perhaps even, we may hypothesize, they have been justly used in that project. Certainly, at least, the IVF project uses embryos in ways that are oriented toward their natural reproductive end. But, still, they have been produced and used in an attempt to satisfy the desires of others. Is not being used once enough? Why, if they are no longer needed or wanted for reproductive purposes, should we suppose that they are still available for our use, still a handy resource for other purposes entirely unrelated to their well-being or their natural end? Why does the fact that they are destined to die, by human will and choice, make them available for our continued use?

"No harm, no foul" may work well enough for officiating basketball, but it does not work well enough for sorting through our moral obligations.

They are destined to die anyway. What follows? Not that we should feel free to use them, but, rather, that, as Hans Jonas once argued with respect to the terminally ill, we should spare them "the gratuitousness of service to an unrelated cause." Given that certain choices have been made, these spare embryos are destined to die, but our relation to their dying is not a matter for moral indifference. It is one thing for us to acquiesce in their death; it is quite another for us to embrace their death as our aim, to seize upon it as an advantageous opportunity to use them yet again for our purposes.

They are destined to die by our will and choice. What follows? Not that we should feel free to use them, but rather that, having condemned them to their fate, we should refrain from the added indignity of regarding them as handy research material. We cannot pretend that they simply are dying—as if that were a natural fact independent of our will and choice. First we decide that they must die. Then we say that, since they're destined to die anyway, we might as well gain some good from that tragedy. Looked at in this light, the argument seems inherently corrupting.

Sometimes, of course, it will be tempting to think that we should at least seize the opportunity to redeem their loss by using them to seek good for others. This is a fascinating thought, depending, as it does, on the intuition that an evil is done here and is in need of redemption. More than a quarter century ago, writing about the ethics of fetal research, Paul Ramsey contemplated similar claims about the need to gain at least some good from the deaths of aborted fetuses. He suggested that only a religious commentary could adequately explain the need to find a salvific or redemptive purpose in research upon condemned and dying human subjects. "Collectively guilt-laden, we go on . . . to other potential harms and wrongs in order to avoid acknowledging the first. . . . We are determined to wrest by our scientific good works" some benefit from the deeds that engender guilt in us. The issue of embryo research is not precisely the same as fetal research, of course, but the insight into our ready recourse to the quasi-religious language of finding some redeeming good in what we do is illuminating.

We need to think again about the spare-embryo argument. Initially appealing as it may be, offering it seems a chance to move forward with research while still drawing a significant moral line, it begins to lose its force the longer we ponder it and the harder we press on it. The very form of the argument—"he'll die anyway; we might as well get some good from his dying"—seduces us into supposing that all moral evils must be forms of "harm." "No harm, no foul" may work well enough for officiating basketball, but it does not work well for sorting through our moral obligations. Reducing all moral evils to harm, we blind ourselves to issues of dignity and justice—as if, for example, we would not wrong a permanently unconscious person by selling tickets for others to observe him.

We need to slow down, think again, and draw back, lest we train ourselves to think in ways that diminish us as a people. Perhaps this means—though it's hard to say for sure—that the pace of medical progress must be slower than it could be. If so, that only means that here, as in so many other areas of research, we accept and honor necessary moral limits. For, as Paul Ramsey also put it, "the moral history of mankind is more important than its medical history." ♦

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"Cherchez La Femme"

This time, I met up with the late, great J. Edgar Hoover, once head of the FBI. This foeman to libelous, loose and wild liberals was intent upon eradicating crime as were his detractors even more intent upon destroying his reputation.

Anyway, "the eternal leader of us all" directed Mr. Hoover to come down here. Said He, "This ominous spread of white collar crime, of corporate scandal is destroying my favorite nation and the world's last, best hope."

"Fine, Sir. I'm off," Mr. Hoover replied. "I've got some ideas on that of which you speak."

"Don't bother to tell Me as if I didn't know. Just do it, my son," said the Father of us all.

J. Edgar Hoover knew his way around the White House. So, he called on G.W. Bush at a time most convenient to the President when he was fast asleep and could dream.

"Mr. President," began Mr. Hoover, "about all this top executive scandal and worse. What is it doing to the nation, not to mention in the eyes of the world?"

"Yes, Edgar, I know," G.W. responded. "You're a crime buster. I should listen. Got any ideas?"

"I do, Sir, one big and simple one. Between Him, you and me, we can put America back on the straight and narrow, as the saying goes," Mr. Hoover said.

"How, Edgar?" the President wondered.

"O.K. Mr. President, here we go," J. Edgar continued. "Merge Sotheby's with Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia."

"Please continue, you're on to something." "First, the two companies fit, Mr. President," Mr. Hoover told G.W. "Second, two of America's top women executives are involved. Third, both women have had, and still do have, brushes with the law..."

"So far, so good," the President thought.

"Well, Sir," Mr. Hoover went on, "America would rather put its talented women to work, not into prison."

"Agreed, Edgar," G.W. applauded J. Edgar.

"But that's not all. We merge the two companies. Next, we make either Dede Brookes or Martha Stewart CEO and the other, Chairman. We let them trade positions when it suits them," said Mr. Hoover.

"Edgar, by heaven, you've got a great idea! What else?" G.W. was anxious to learn.

"Mr. President, America's women deserve a place in the sun. It's in your power to make it so, if you do this."

"More than votes, I hope you mean, Edgar," said the president.

"Oh yes, Sir, much more," exclaimed Mr. Hoover. "Both ladies deserve another chance. This time its like they're in a goldfish bowl for everyone to see. And who better than they are qualified to spot a scandal or worse if ever again it should raise its ugly head?"

"You know, Edgar, there's something to this that I sense could relight the flame of confidence in the economy and in ourselves," G.W. told him.

"Whatever happens, Mr. President," said Mr. Hoover, "the French say it best of all, cherchez la femme."

"Truer words were never spoken," smiled G.W.

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A Place of Her Own

Rediscovering Sarah Orne Jewett

By CLAUDIA WINKLER

Sarah Orne Jewett. Hulton / Archive.

The name Sarah Orne Jewett, for those to whom it means anything at all, evokes principally the landscape of southern Maine and the particular serenity of her 1896 novel *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. Because she captured there the harmonies of undramatic lives lived out in their native place, Jewett deserves the attention of modern readers too prone to overlook so pallid a thing as contentment. And she remains worth reading for another reason: her role as mentor to a better-remembered and greater artist, Willa Cather.

Early classified (and nowadays mostly dismissed) as a "local colorist"—doing for Maine what the likes of John Fox Jr. had done for Kentucky, Thomas Nelson Page for Virginia, and Edward Eggleston for Indiana—Jewett was *rooted* in a way almost no American is anymore. She was born in 1849 in the inland port of South Berwick, upriver from Portland, the daughter of a prosperous and cultivated doctor. As a girl, she accompanied her father on his visits to patients, taking in the ways and speech of the local people. Her first story was published when she was nineteen, and soon her work was appearing regularly in the *Atlantic Monthly*, edited by the young William Dean Howells. With his encouragement, she produced three novels: *Deephaven* in 1877, *A Country Doctor* in 1884, and her masterpiece, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. She died a few years after suffering injuries in a carriage accident, in 1909.

Jewett's writing enjoyed immediate success. Before she was thirty, she was "a fully arrived celebrity," as an early biographer put it, and she was swept into the literary circles of nearby Boston. Upon reading *Deephaven*—a youthful precursor to *The Country of the Pointed Firs*—for the third time, the poet John Greenleaf Whittier wrote her a fan letter. Two years later, she was a guest at the seventieth birthday party of the literary lion Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Along the way, Jewett became friends with the publisher of the *Atlantic*, James T. Fields, and his wife, Annie, and after Fields's death, Annie and Sarah were companions. For some years, they kept a Boston salon at 146 Charles Street, where they hosted the literati of the day—meeting, there and on trips to Europe, such luminaries as Henry James, Kipling, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, and the Dickens family.

Through all this exposure to high culture, Jewett never deviated from her own vocation as a chronicler of simple country life. Her characters live close to nature, in isolated homesteads and small seaports. Above her desk she kept a line from Flaubert: "To write about ordinary life as one would write history."

Her most famous story, "A White Heron," is emblematic. In the story, a little girl walking her cow home through the woods encounters a young man with a gun. He is an ornithologist, come in search of a white heron. He spends the night at the girl's house and offers the dazzling sum of $10 to any who will lead him to the great bird's nest. He is kind and attractive. Want-

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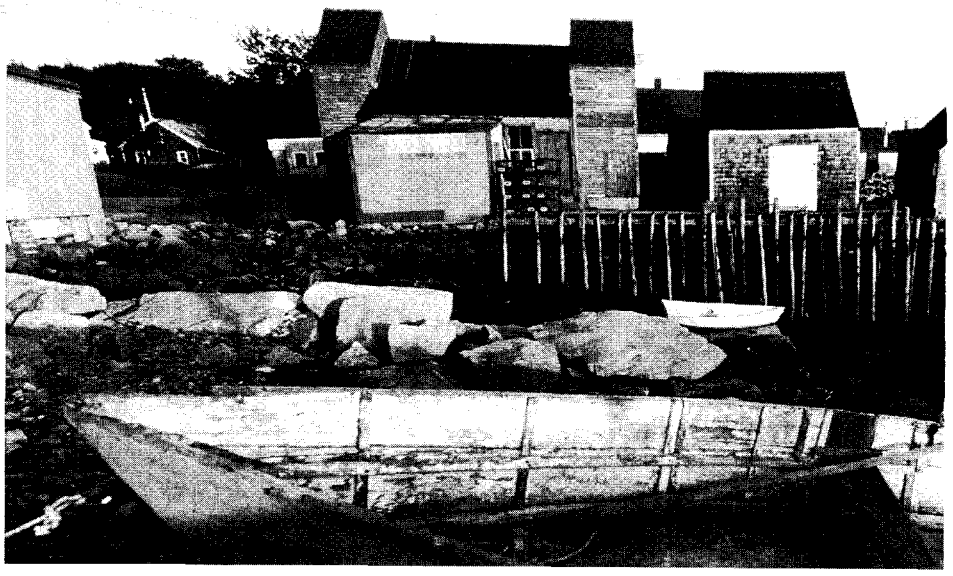
ing to please him, she slips away to climb the tallest tree at dawn, to see the white heron's first flight and so discover its nest. Her plan works perfectly—until the moment comes to tell. Remembering how she had seen the great bird "flying through the golden air and how they [had] watched the sea and the morning together," the child realizes "she cannot tell the heron's secret and give its life away."

Her decision involves sacrifice, for the stranger has awakened intimations of adventure in a wider world. But her loyalty to the woods and its creatures is decisive. The story ends: "Whatever treasures were lost to her, woodlands and summer-time remember! Bring your gifts and graces and tell your secrets to this lonely country child!"



Fidelity, this time not to nature but to vocation, is also the theme of *A Country Doctor*. Anna Prince, an orphan, is raised in the town of Oldfields by a kind widower, Dr. Leslie, who recognizes her aptitude for his profession. Eventually, Anna herself comes to see medicine as her God-given calling. Like Sylvia in "A White Heron," she is fleetingly tempted by romance but hews to her chosen path and finishes medical school. She quietly disregards the "fettering conventionalities" upheld by some disapproving townsfolk and relatives, and earns their respect for her healing art. She finds joy in serving the people of Oldfields and environs, not only by relieving their bodily pains, but also by acting as their comforter, confessor, and "interpreter of the outside world."

This coherence of work and surroundings, and the selfless devotion to the good of others, are reprised on a higher literary plane in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. Where "A White Heron" is crudely symbolic (the woodland child is named Sylvia; the man is never without his gun) and *A Country Doctor* intermittently reads like a tract ("our heroine" is actually likened to Christ), *The Country of the Pointed Firs* has the individuality of fully realized art.

The central characters are three single women. Two are widows—Almira Todd, a sixty-seven-year-old herbal healer, and her elderly mother, Mrs. Blackett—while the third, never named, is a writer who rents a room from Mrs. Todd for a few months' summer stay in the coastal village of Dunnet Landing. This third woman is the narrator, the outsider through whose eyes we discover this place.

The plot is nearly nonexistent: a succession of scenes, many consisting merely of conversations. A Milton-quoting retired sea captain pines for the wider horizons of bygone whaling days. A grief-stricken widowed fisherman knits as he remembers his beloved wife, whom he honors by striving to maintain her standards of housekeeping. Mrs. Todd recounts the saga of "poor Joanna," the daughter of a good family who, crossed in love, retreated to Shell-heap Island and lived there as a hermit till she died, whereupon the whole town turned out to bury her on the island in accordance with her wishes.

At the heart of the book is an account of a day trip to Green Island by Mrs. Todd and the narrator. This farthest offshore island is where Mrs. Blackett lives and farms, with an "odd" aging son named William who never left home.

Mrs. Blackett is Jewett's finest creation. At eighty-six, she has seen "every trouble" short of her own death, yet she is light-hearted and light-footed. She is discerning, too—Almira Todd speaks of "mother's snap and power o' seein' things just as they be"—and, above all, generous. Her hospitality is "something exquisite," and of tact, which is "after all a kind of mind-reading," she has the "golden gift."

After the visitors have eaten a meal of fish chowder and explored the island while Almira gathers pennyroyal and other herbs for her syrups and elixirs, the visitors come into the farmhouse for a last cup of tea. William, conquering his shyness, sings for them, and his mother joins in the old Scottish and English tunes and Civil War ballads.

Then, just before their farewells, while Almira is bundling up her herbs, Mrs. Blackett invites the summer guest into her bedroom to sit in her rocker and see the finest view in the house. The room is plain. There is a Bible on the lightstand, and a pair of glasses and a thimble. A striped cotton shirt Mrs. Blackett is making for William is neatly folded on the table. "I sat in the rocking-chair," records the narrator, "and felt that it was a place of peace, the little brown bedroom and the quiet outlook upon field and sea and sky. I looked up, and we understood each other without speaking. 'I shall like to think o' you settin' here today,' said Mrs. Blackett. 'I want you to come again. It has been so pleasant for William.'"

As drama, it barely registers on the Richter scale. Yet perhaps the serene climax of *The Country of the Pointed Firs* conveys why Willa Cather could quote Henry James as saying of Jewett, "She had a sort of elegance of humility, or

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Kevin Fleming / CORBIS

fine flame of modesty. She was content to be slight if she could be true."

Willa Cather knew Sara Orne Jewett briefly, during the sixteen months before Jewett's death. It was Louis Brandeis's wife Alice who took Cather—by this time no longer a refugee fresh from Nebraska, but an accomplished New York journalist and story writer in her early thirties—to the house on Charles Street. Cather showed Jewett her stories and took to heart the older woman's advice: to work at writing fiction full time, and write what she knew.

"Write it as it is, don't try to make it like this or that," Cather summed up the injunction. After a false start with her first novel, the pseudo-Jamesian *Alexander's Bridge* (1912), she turned seriously to her "home" material, and by 1918 had published all three of her prairie novels, *O Pioneers!*, *The Song of the Lark*, and *My Ántonia*.

Cather remained deeply grateful to Jewett, her only female mentor, and in 1925 wrote the introduction to a new edition of *The Country of the Pointed Firs* and other stories, lauding them as "almost flawless examples of literary art." She even likened *The Country of the Pointed Firs* to *Huckleberry Finn* and *The Scarlet Letter*. In an expanded essay on Jewett published in 1936, Cather was more restrained, saying only that Jewett, like Twain and Hawthorne, possessed that "very personal quality of perception, a vivid and intensely personal experience of life, which make a 'style.'"

It was a style that was rapidly becoming passé. By the 1930s, literary fashion was running to Fitzgerald and Hemingway, Eliot and Joyce. Wrote Cather: "Imagine a young man or woman, born in New York City, educated at a New York university, violently inoculated by Freud, hurried into journalism, knowing no more about New England country people (or country folk anywhere) than he has caught from motor trips or observed from summer hotels: what is there for him in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*?"

But the kinship between Cather and Jewett transcends fashion. Indeed, it consists partly of an indifference to fashion. Both are very American artists, responsive to nature, to landscape, and to people who live close to the land. Neither bothers much with politics or high society; both write about religion. Neither woman married or successfully portrays romantic love in fiction (Jewett doesn't try). Both are most at home writing about, as critic Joan Acocella says of Cather, "noble-minded people living in small towns."

It was a subject embedded in their life histories. Growing up in out-of-the-way places—Jewett in South Berwick, Cather in Red Cloud, Nebraska—they had some similar experiences. Each received her early education mainly through her friendships with adults. Just as Jewett accompanied her father on his medical rounds, so Cather attached herself to a German piano teacher, devoured the library of a Jewish couple, and rode out in the buggies of both of Red Cloud's doctors, peppering them with questions about science. Like Jewett, she reprised all this in fiction. In *The Song of the Lark* Thea Kronborg grows up to become not a doctor but a singer, yet Dr. Archie remains her lifelong friend.

In other ways, however, Jewett and Cather's biographies—and their writing—sharply diverged. Jewett, whose fiction evokes a single, integrated culture, never really left home. South Berwick is only seventy miles from Boston. As a young woman, she could move into a cosmopolitan adult world without cutting her New England roots. She always spent summers in the Maine house where she grew up. She died in the house where she was born.

The contrast could hardly be greater with Cather, who early lost any chance for such stable belonging. When she was nine, her family made the wrenching move from their farm near Winchester, Virginia, to Nebraska, where they lived first on the prairie, then after a year in a town of about 1,200. Going to college meant the University of Nebraska, in raw Lincoln, scarcely gouged from the frontier. Work as a journalist and teacher took her to Pittsburgh, then New York. She traveled in the southwest and in Europe, and ultimately settled in Greenwich Village, summering in New Brunswick, Canada, and spending the fall months in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, where she is buried. Not surprisingly, Cather gave her stories widely varied settings: Nebraska, eastern Colorado, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Virginia, a French battlefield, New Mexico, seventeenth-century Quebec. Her last, unfinished novel was set in medieval Avignon.

Similarly, where Jewett wrote about people in their indigenous surroundings, Cather studied exiles: Bohemian immigrants and Scandinavian pioneers on the plains, farm girls in town and small-town girls in the big city, a Colorado pastor's kid on the stage of the Dresden Opera, and French priests in the lonely far reaches of the New World.

In 1925, when Willa Cather prepared her new edition of Jewett and wrote that introduction so lavishly praising *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, she herself was incubating what would prove to be her own most nearly perfect book, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, published in 1927. There are enough affinities between *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *The Country of the Pointed Firs* to suggest that Cather's great New Mexico novel was nourished by her reflections on Jewett's masterpiece.

Cather's essay praises Jewett's book for its structure—"so tightly built and significant in design"—and its inherent beauty. In both respects, her own book resembles it. Like *The Country of*

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the Pointed Firs, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is a succession of episodes virtually without plot. A young French missionary working in Ohio is named the first bishop of New Mexico. He goes there, explores his immense diocese on horseback, encounters some singular personalities, has certain adventures, plants a garden, builds a cathedral, grows old, dies.

True, Bishop Latour's relationship with a second central character, his boyhood friend and vicar, Father Vaillant, appears throughout the book—rather as do the relationships among the three women in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. And Cather's novel is held together by two other constants: the omnipresent scenery of desert and canyon, mesa and arroyo, stone and adobe; and the central thread, the bishop's everyday, faithful performance of his life's work. Nevertheless, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is mostly discontinuous close-ups and free-standing scenes, strung together like beads on a string.

Cather could have been talking about her own New Mexico novel-in-the-making when she wrote, "The *Pointed Fir* sketches are living things caught in the open, with light and freedom and air-spaces about them. They melt into the land and the life of the land until they are not stories at all, but life itself." This capturing of life itself is what the artist strives for, and Cather begins her introduction with an observation of Jewett's from their correspondence about how it is achieved: "The thing that teases the mind over and over for years," Jewett wrote, "and at last gets itself put down rightly on paper—whether little or great, it belongs to Literature."

In *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, Willa Cather gave fullest expression to two themes that had teased her mind persistently for years: the Southwest and Christianity. (A third such theme—the French domestic arts as carriers of civilization—is present here but reaches full flower only in her next book, *Shadows on the Rock*.)

Cather first visited the Southwest in 1912. She returned again and again to explore the old towns and Spanish missions and cliff dwellings; and she steeped herself in the memoirs of early explorers and missionaries (including the originals of her Bishop Latour and Father Vaillant). She used the Southwest as the backdrop for a somewhat contrived passage of *The Song of the Lark*; then again for the middle section of *The Professor's House*, a book otherwise set in a midwestern college town—and published the very year of her

Willa Cather

CORBIS

essay on Jewett. Perhaps as she contemplated Jewett, who embraced her Maine material so unreservedly, Cather glimpsed what it would mean to devote an entire novel to the Southwest. "If [the writer] achieves anything noble, anything enduring," Cather wrote in her introduction to Jewett,

> it must be by giving himself absolutely to his material. And this gift of sympathy is his great gift; is the fine thing in him that alone can make his work fine. He fades away into the land and people of his heart, he dies of love only to be born again. The artist spends a life-time in loving the things that haunt him, in having his mind "teased" by them, in trying to get these conceptions down on paper exactly as they are to him and not in conventional poses supposed to reveal their character.

So, too, Christianity "haunted" Cather—another link with Jewett. Reared in a Baptist home, Cather attended Episcopal services as a young woman, but it was only in 1922, when she was nearly fifty, that she was confirmed in the Episcopal Church. Apparently something had ripened in her own religious life in the years just before she undertook her reconsideration of Jewett and went on to write a whole novel about Catholic priests. Fresh from meditating on *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, with its deft interweaving of place, ethos, and personality, Cather produced a book saturated with a sense of place, about two men living out lives consecrated to God.

That it could influence, so profoundly, a book as good as *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is sufficient reason to take another look at *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, an American classic whose memory seems to have faded even among the well-read. It is a book whose power and beauty are difficult to sum up. It leaves in the mind of the reader, as Cather wrote, "an intangible residuum of pleasure; a cadence, a quality of voice that is exclusively the writer's own, individual, unique. A quality that one can remember without the volume at hand, can experience over and over again in the mind but can never absolutely define."

At the beginning of that essay on Jewett, Cather placed an epigraph from the poetess Louise Imogen Guiney: *But give to thine own story / Simplicity, with glory*. That word "glory"—while apt for Cather, never one "content to be slight"—doesn't ring quite true for the self-effacing Jewett. Closer to the mark are the words of an early commentator who praised Jewett's "sweet, sane knowledge of life." The chronicler of a world where conversation is a kindness—where "fitness" is an ultimate tribute and self-forgetfulness is "the highest gift of heaven"—Jewett gave a great deal to the more restless and ambitious literary heir who so warmly acknowledged the debt. To the overstimulated, worldly-wise reader of today she has at least as much to offer. ♦

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Strange Land

Peter Lawler's America.

BY PETER J. HANSEN

The book title *Aliens in America* derives from a remark that Walker Percy made about Carl Sagan. Percy wondered why Sagan was so eager to find aliens on other planets when our own planet is peopled by aliens stranger than any extraterrestrials we might find. Percy was alluding to St. Augustine's statement that we humans are all "pilgrims or aliens in this world," as political theorist Peter Lawler puts it, "because our true home is somewhere else."

Aliens in America
The Strange Truth about Our Souls
by Peter Augustine Lawler
ISI, 350 pp., $24.95

Informed by this articulation of the human situation, Lawler examines America. He ranges wide, looking at left and right, theory and practice, history and nature, trendy postmodern thinkers and firmly conservative ones.

The best chapter in the book is "Religion and the American Idea of Liberty." Lawler's description of those who support religious belief primarily for political ends amounts to a powerful critique without any need for overt attack. William Galston, for example, "admits that the main cause of the growth of divorce . . . is that choice and contract have largely replaced the 'sacramental' understanding of marriage." The sacramental understanding of marriage, of course, derives from religious faith. Marriage largely ceases to function when viewed as merely beneficial or functional.

Those who cherish the liberal principles articulated in the Declaration of Independence may welcome the support that religion gives liberal democracy, but they have no remedy to offer as liberal principles gradually weaken religion and other non-liberal sources of obligation and authority. "Functional traditionalists cannot even formulate a rhetoric for the restoration or the recovery of what they really regard as a necessary illusion." Whether or not they fully admit it to themselves, such thinkers believe "that the definition of man as the being with rights is both empirically correct and socially destructive."

So neoconservatives and neoliberals occupy a precarious position, less robust and defensible than that of those Lawler calls "the orthodox." He prefers the term "orthodox" to "traditional" because "most such believers have chosen or converted to a way of life usually not shared with equivalent intensity by their fathers." Since the orthodox are rarely described or represented in national political magazines, Lawler's description is worth quoting:

> Orthodox believers are not reliable political conservatives. They have little use for either country-club Republicans or therapeutic Democrats, and especially today they often tend to put little hope in political reform. They sometimes can ally with libertarians against big government, since their experience has typically been that wherever government goes, God and moral responsibility disappear. And they see . . . no way to reform our public institutions, particularly our schools. Their political aim is to protect the freedom of churches and parents to educate children and exercise authority. But they are further than anyone from the nerve of libertarian morality. . . . They regard the progressive view that life gets more moral and easier as it gets more rights-oriented and individualistic as a lie.

This is a striking portrait; but one might wonder how many people it really resembles. While most home-schooling Christian families are firmly pro-life, their thoughts on rights and individualism seem less clear and defiant than Lawler indicates. The very language in which they defend their pro-life position is often grounded in rights, rather than an explicitly religious understanding. Nonetheless, the mere act of home-schooling is evidently a major form of opting out of the mainstream, and Lawler is surely right that "the real counterculture in America is revealed religion."

At the other end of the spectrum are the liberals. After discussing Alan Ehrenhalt's excellent portrait of communal authority in Chicago neighborhoods in the 1950s, Lawler notes that such authority is usually described by "the malcontent who can remember nothing good about, say, nun-run parochial schools. But everyone knows that those schools prepared most children for life as parents, citizens, and parishioners (and the liberal critics for their lives as writers) far better than most schools do now."

Lawler notes that "the being with rights characteristically does not acknowledge his debts to others and to communities." To view oneself as a being with rights (rather than duties or constitutive membership in some larger group) invites one to forget one's dependence on other people and on God.

This insight applies not merely to liberal Democrats but more broadly to liberal democrats, which is to say most Americans. In Lawler's view, Americans suffer from (and cause suffering by) an increasingly narrow, conditional view of their obligations and attachments. "Calculation about one's own emotional well-being has, to an amazing and unprecedented extent, become the language of moral discourse among otherwise ordinary Americans."

Even in evangelical authors like James Dobson, therapeutic language has compromised biblical morality (an

A businessman and political theorist living in Alstead, New Hampshire, Peter J. Hansen is writing a book entitled Vices of Democracy.

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observation that is hard to reconcile with the portrait of defiant orthodoxy Lawler draws).

It isn't that Lawler lacks sympathy with the belief in individual rights or with the desire to alleviate suffering. He simply thinks that something critically human is lost if all obligations become voluntary, or if all suffering can be relieved with the right pill. To be human is to be dominated by the feelings surrounding love and death. To be human is to live with misery; if misery is abolished, the beings who remain will be something less than human.

Lawler sees little danger that this will occur anytime soon. Nonetheless, he worries that misery—and therefore humanity properly understood—might eventually be eliminated through genetic manipulation. Perhaps he worries too much. While genetic tinkering might eventually reduce, for example, the propensity to schizophrenia or severe depression, it is hard to see how it could produce a self-conscious being who isn't troubled by his own mortality.

Lawler is less consistently clear and sharp when he leaves behind ordinary Americans and confronts more abstract or philosophic thinkers. His chapter linking Tocqueville and Percy is interesting but strained. As Lawler notes, both men think about what might be lost in the triumph of democracy over aristocracy. However, Percy's emphasis on "love as a compensation for loneliness in the ruins" might seem part of the problem to Tocqueville, who worries that democratic man will "isolate himself from the mass of his fellow men and withdraw with his family and his friends."

On the other hand, Lawler's contrast of Percy with Sagan is surprisingly interesting and enjoyable. Percy observes that "the self or the being that can know the cosmos, is always a leftover in any account of the cosmos. So as modern science explains more and more about the cosmos, the human being experiences himself as more and more an alien." Perhaps the strangest phenomenon in the cosmos is the being who tries to understand the cosmos by principles which exclude anyone trying to understand the cosmos. "Scientism attempts to dispense with human mystery and human uniqueness. But actually doing so would create a world not only without religion but without science."

Lawler seeks to find a middle way or synthesis which does justice to the claims of orthodoxy on the one hand and liberalism and science on the other. One alternative he discusses is natural law. However, he himself suggests that natural law as understood by Thomas Aquinas (and American Catholic thinker John Courtney Murray) is dependent upon revelation and thus isn't truly "natural."

Lawler says little about the oldest and arguably most satisfying alternative to both liberalism and orthodoxy: ancient philosophy. Given his concerns and the authors he discusses, this is a puzzling omission.

If one takes one's bearings by Plato or Aristotle rather than John Locke, then the politically unhealthy character of Locke's teaching is less troubling. Moreover, philosophy and science as the ancients understand them do not mean squeezing the objects of study into abstract mathematical categories which exclude the scientist himself.

Nonetheless, Peter Lawler's *Aliens in America* is an interesting and worthwhile book. In describing the intellectual currents currently in motion around him, Lawler implicitly and explicitly lays out his own position; and it is one likely to attract thoughtful adherents. ♦

Churchill the Historian

Writing history as well as making it.

BY JOHN P. ROSSI

New books on Winston Churchill continue to pour forth from the presses. Last year alone biographies by Roy Jenkins and Geoffrey Best appeared. This year at least four more special studies will be published, including another biography by the military historian John Keegan and a collection of essays on Churchill's career by John Lukacs, author of the highly successful *Five Days in London, May 1940*.

Churchill's Military Histories
A Rhetorical Study
by Algis Valiunas
Rowman & Littlefield, 202 pp., $35

Some of the explanation for this explosion of interest in Churchill is obvious. He was the most influential statesman of the twentieth century: the man who saved the West in that dangerous summer of 1940. But great as he was as a wartime leader, Churchill also was a first-class historian—and with the exception of his six-volume history of the Second World War, most of Churchill's historical writing has been forgotten. Some of the key works are not even in print.

But now, in *Churchill's Military Histories: A Rhetorical Study*, Algis Valiunas—a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD and other magazines—seeks to remind us why Churchill won the 1953 Nobel prize for literature. Focusing on Churchill's military histories and seeking in them keys to understanding Churchill's worldview, Valiunas shows how inseparable these two sides of Churchill are: Churchill the historian reveals much about Churchill the statesman.

Valiunas examines Churchill's prolific military writings, beginning with

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the four volumes of half-history, half-autobiography he wrote about Britain's imperial wars in the late nineteenth century. Other works analyzed include Churchill's *The World Crisis* (a history of World War I), *The Duke of Marlborough* (a biography of Churchill's ancestor), the six-volume study of World War II, and finally the paean to the English and the Americans, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*.

Digging beneath Churchill's rolling prose, Valiunas shows us a first-class mind pondering the lessons that warfare teaches. One theme running through Churchill's histories is how a prudent and clear-sighted policy could have commanded events. This is particularly true about his analysis of the events leading up to the outbreak of World War I and the failures of Britain's appeasement policy in the 1930s.

Valiunas is at his best on the now nearly forgotten four volumes of imperial history that Churchill wrote as a young man, including *The River War*, where he describes the reconquest of the Sudan by General Kitchener and in which Churchill took part as both a soldier and a journalist. *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, about an expedition designed to punish the Pathan tribes along the Indian-Afghan border, reads at times like a commentary on the actions of United States forces in Afghanistan today.

Churchill was never blind to the faults of imperialism, but he argued in these volumes that the expansion of the British empire was a positive good. He contrasted Britain's ruthlessness and decency with her opponents' ruthlessness and indecency. Where the empire spread, much good followed: the abolition of suttee in India, the banning of the exposure of female children, and the ending of slavery in the Sudan and other parts of Africa. In light of recent events, Churchill's view of Islam is also interesting: "That religion, which above all others was founded and propagated by the sword—the tenets and principles of which are . . . incentives to slaughter and which in three continents had produced fighting breeds of men—stimulates a wild and merciless fanaticism."

Hulton-Deutsch Collection / CORBIS

Churchill the writer

All four volumes of Churchill's imperial histories are back in print. Sadly, the same can't be said for *The World Crisis*. Valiunas does a superb job of reminding us just how good Churchill's history of this ghastly war was. Churchill wanted to put the war into some kind of historical perspective, and intended not just to dwell on the war as a nightmare—to make clear that the nightmare did not take place in a void.

The British won, but they did so at an awful cost to Western civilization. Churchill demonstrates the incapacity, intemperance, folly, and lack of prudence at the highest reaches of both the political and military leadership. As an active participant in the war—he was First Lord of the Admiralty when it broke out—Churchill was involved in many of the crucial decisions that shaped it.

As early as December 1914, four months after the war began, he told Herbert Asquith, the prime minister, that the war was deadlocked. "The position of both armies is not likely to undergo any decisive change—although no doubt several hundred thousand men will be spent to satisfy the military mind on this point."

In the last three sections of *Churchill's Military Histories*, Valiunas examines Churchill's *Marlborough*, *History of the Second World War*, and *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*. While good, these sections lack the freshness of Valiunas's insights into the imperial histories and *The World Crisis*. The analysis of the World War II books is best on the first volume, *The Gathering Storm*, where Churchill set the stage for the war that he characterized as "The Unnecessary War." Valiunas shows how in Churchill's view the Allied leaders, especially Neville Chamberlain, lacked resolution in the face of the emerging Nazi threat. Chamberlain failed the test of prudence in developing and shaping his policy of appeasement. He sought peace and got war.

Churchill's *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* was begun in the 1930s and completed and published in the 1950s. It was his last great work and one whose thesis was dear to him. He believed that the English-speaking peoples—not just in Britain, but elsewhere, especially in America—were fated to save Western civilization. His history was an attempt to call America to recognize its responsibility.

With *Churchill's Military Histories*, Algis Valiunas shows that we cannot grasp Churchill the historical figure without an understanding of Churchill the historian. ♦

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War Matters

Philip Bobbitt's big book on war and culture. BY FRED SIEGEL

A few years ago there was hue and cry over the loss of academic interest in the subject of war. The complaints were premature. Philip Bobbitt's *The Shield of Achilles* will see to that. It's a book so ambitious, and so often interesting, that those who make it through the more than nine hundred pages are likely to forgive its failings. Expansively subtitled *War, Peace, and the Course of History*, it opens with Muslim cannons breaching the once impregnable walls of Constantinople in 1453 and ends with a series of scenarios for a twenty-first century haunted by nuclear proliferation and asymmetrical warfare.

The Shield of Achilles
War, Peace, and the Course of History
by Philip Bobbitt
Knopf, 919 pp., $40

The title—derived from the *Iliad*'s description of the scenes of war and peace embossed on Achilles' shield—is intended to suggest an intimate link between war and culture. Bobbitt describes war as a "creative act of civilized man." Through a foreword, a prologue, two introductions, an epilogue, a postscript, and three appendices (not to mention the actual body of the text), Bobbitt argues that the changing forms of the modern state are primarily a reflection of military innovations—and that, in turn, the internal ordering of the leading states are inevitably reflected in the international structures they help create.

In the foreword, the eminent military historian Michael Howard, moved by the scope of *The Shield of Achilles* as well as its pessimism about the unavoidability of war, compares the book to Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*. Spengler saw history as an inexorable process whose outcomes were independent of political choices. But Bobbitt, who worked for the Carter, Reagan (briefly), Bush, and Clinton administrations as legal counselor and adviser on strategic planning, sees a variety of choices ahead. Howard is right, however, that these choices do not involve whether we will be entangled in future wars. They are rather choices over how we will fight them.

War, says Bobbitt, now a professor at the University of Texas law school, is the primary engine of history. To make his case he takes the reader through the template of what Max Weber first described as the military revolution in early modern Europe. It began in 1494 when the French King Charles VIII invaded Italy, and his mercenary soldiers, deploying relatively lightweight bronze cannons, easily breached the defenses of the Italian city-states.

Before this, wars were long, drawn out sieges conducted under knightly rules. In response to the new weaponry, the Italian city-states literally reconstituted themselves. They hired mercenaries, and in order to pay for them they created the beginning of a modern state which could collect taxes on a regular basis. The changes, noted Machiavelli, meant that the principalities could no longer rely on medieval relationships but had to win the loyalty of the population. "There must be good laws where there are good arms," explained Machiavelli, "and where there are good arms there must be good laws." Generalizing, Bobbitt asserts that "every change in the constitutional arrangements of the State will have strategic consequences, and also the other way around."

Building on this initial example, Bobbitt argues that the modern world was shaped by five subsequent "epochal wars" (defined as wars "that challenge and change the basic constitutional structure of the State by linking strategic to constitutional innovations"). In each case, the conflict produced a new state form: first the princely state, then the kingly state, then the territorial state, the state-nation, and the nation-state. "The princely state," Bobbitt explains, "promised external security, . . . the Kingly state added the promise of internal stability, . . . the territorial state added the promise of expanding material wealth to which the state-nation added the civil and political rights of popular sovereignty, . . . the nation-state added economic security."

Bobbitt, in one of his best sections, argues that the two World Wars and the Cold War of the twentieth century should be seen as part of one "Long War." It was, he says, a protracted three-cornered conflict in which communism, fascism, and parliamentarianism fought to see which version of the "nation-state" could impose its internal and thus external vision on the others. But now, he asserts, with the Peace of Paris in 1990 recognizing German reunification and the American victory in the Cold War, "a new constitutional order—the market state which reduces the states' responsibilities—is about to emerge."

This market-state will be a looser, more libertarian arrangement. But, Bobbitt goes on, the nuclear innovations of the Long War and the borderless world of markets will make it increasingly difficult for the market-state to fulfill its responsibilities. That, he insists, will produce a crisis of legitimation, and he lays out a series of scenarios as to how this crisis will play out. "If the pattern of earlier eras is to be repeated," Bobbitt warns, "then we await a new, epochal war with state-shattering consequences."

In the course of making his case, Bobbitt delivers fascinating mini-chapters. There's one, for instance, on Castlereagh, the Napoleonic-era British foreign minister who "sought to intro-

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duce a benign, shared hegemony based on a mutual recognition of rights underpinned by law."

But for all its virtues, the book is wildly repetitive. Where was Bobbitt's editor at Knopf? The first half of *The Shield of Achilles* treats epochal wars, the second, the epochal peace agreements that ended those wars—which means Bobbitt goes over the same ground twice. The book is so sprawling that what's said in one section is contradicted in another. Early on, for instance, Bobbitt insists, consistent with his larger argument, that the revival of German militarism after 1919 wasn't a failure of treaty-making so much as an expression of unresolved German aspirations for power and domination. But six hundred pages down the road, he adopts the conventional notion that the problem was in the treaty itself. Bobbitt sometimes gets tangled up in his own categories, which require him to turn Bismarck into a fascist and Lenin into the leader of a nation-state while conflating the nationalism of Lincoln and Louis Napoleon.

The Shield of Achilles was largely written before September 11, and, despite some efforts to include Islamic fascism in closing sections, the treatment of the Arab world is weak. He makes the mistake of seeing al Qaeda as a "virtual state" when it's an offshoot of both Muslim and communist "brotherhoods." Bobbitt's most convincingly plausible scenario deals with nuclear proliferation. He worries that nuclear competition on the Korean peninsula will first produce Japanese H-bombs, and then South Korean calls for an American nuclear guarantee against Japan, which the United States will be unwilling to provide. It's in this context that a Star Wars program becomes significant: Without it, the threat of American force loses its credibility, and regional conflicts in East Asia could easily spill over into a catastrophic war.

The problems Bobbitt identifies are real, but nuclear proliferation aside, his scenarios are questionable. Caught up in his own formula, he seeks to replicate the earlier conflict between communism, fascism, and parliamentarianism with a new three-cornered conflict between the Washington-entrepreneurial, Berlin-managerial, and Tokyo-mercantile models for the future. Oddly enough, he describes each as a version of the minimalist market-state potentially capable of imposing itself on the others. But this comes at a time when Europe prefers to import Islamic immigrant radicalism rather than modify its cradle-to-grave spending, and at a moment when Tokyo, rather than moving towards dominance, is so stagnant that it fears being overtaken economically by China within twenty years. Bobbitt similarly misses the vitality of the American nation-state. Europe may be post-heroic, Europe may want to share sovereignty, but the United States does not. And this transatlantic tension will only grow as Europe responds to further Islamic terror by paying more protection money.

Worse yet, Bobbitt misconceives the market-state. He argues both that the market-state "exists to maximize the opportunities enjoyed by all members of society" and that the tight relation between government and citizen characteristic of the nation-state will be loosened considerably.

But market matters dominate state policy only in the absence of war. Thus the long peace of the nineteenth century allowed the British to rule an empire with a limited government. But as Randolph Bourne noted, "war is the health of the state," so that both the class and national wars of the twentieth century generated vastly expanded government. If Bobbitt is right about the rosy future of war, there is little reason to think that the state will shrink profoundly in the coming years.

Nonetheless, the reader will come away from *The Shield of Achilles* with a heightened sense of how the modern state has been shaped by war, and how in turn what Bobbitt calls the "inner and outer faces" of a state relate to each other.

Bobbitt's book has evoked a bitterly hostile response from the *bien pensants* of academia, who brand him a warmonger. But flaws and all, this is a big book—in both senses of the term. *The Shield of Achilles* should become required reading not only in the academy but for the military and civilian decision-makers of the industrialized world. ♦

Muddy Waters

Broadway domesticates a Hollywood rebel.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

In 1972, a strange young Baltimorean with a pencil-thin moustache made a cheap film he intended to be "the most offensive movie ever made." *Pink Flamingos* starred an obese drag queen who is shown eating poodle droppings, and its explicit purpose was to take every cliché about conventional American family life and subvert it. *Pink Flamingos* was shown only at midnight on the weekends in hippie venues, and its writer-director John Waters became a cinematic version of William S. Burroughs: a middle-American hipster-pervert.

Now, thirty years later, John Waters is the king of Broadway, the darling of the same suburbia he once targeted. His 1988 movie *Hairspray* has just been converted into a musical comedy that is going to run for ten years on Broadway and be performed every spring in high schools for a half century afterwards. Waters says he loves the show, and the musical version of *Hairspray* is very lovable indeed. The score by Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman fea-

Contributing editor John Podhoretz last wrote for THE WEEKLY STANDARD *about Oscar Hammerstein.*

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tures one showstopper after another. The book by Thomas Meehan and Mark O'Donnell is crisp and funny. Jerry Mitchell's choreography is exuberant, the sets by David Rockwell are eye-catching, and Jack O'Brien's direction is inspired.

Hairspray is a giddy and propulsive show about an effort to integrate a segregated teenage dance show on Baltimore television in 1962. A dreamy-eyed fat girl named Tracy Turnblad (played by the sensational Marissa Jaret Winokur) wants more than life itself to appear on the "Corny Collins Show," which has a team of all-white teen dancers—except for a single afternoon every month dubbed "Negro Day." Tracy gets her wish after she's taught some dance moves by the black kids she meets in detention. Not only that, but she steals the show's on-air heartthrob Link away from the scheming Amber von Tussle. And when Tracy decides that "every day should be Negro Day," the world turns upside down.

Neil Simon Theatre

The show's composer, Marc Shaiman, is best known as the arranger of the great soundtracks to such movies as *When Harry Met Sally* and *Sleepless in Seattle*. He knows more about the history of American popular music than practically anyone alive, and Shaiman's comprehensive knowledge shines through in a score that harvests every conceivable three-chord rock-and-roll progression. The songs aren't especially memorable, but as a whole the score effervesces. Subtle *Hairspray* isn't, but Shaiman and company understand that musicals shouldn't be subtle. At their best, musicals are charged with manic energy. And indeed, you leave *Hairspray* on a contact high, drunk on the adrenaline the cast uses to dance its way through the show's two hours and forty minutes. This is a great evening in the theater, and one would have to dig deep to find anything remotely offensive about it.

What does this say about the man who longed to be the most offensive filmmaker who ever lived? John Waters broke all kinds of taboos in the early 1970s with his underground movies. But lots of people were looking for taboos to break in those days, and soon, for a true bohemian oddball like Waters, there was nothing left to trash. So where was he to go?

Where he went was *Hairspray*. The 1988 movie was the first of his pictures to get a major studio release, but it's actually as subversive as *Pink Flamingos*. Several years before the term "politically correct" gained popular currency, Waters offered in *Hairspray* a parody of political correctness. It's one thing to make fun of suburban housewives, but how about sending up black folk in segregated Baltimore? That's exactly what Waters dares to do in *Hairspray*, which is really his cracked vision of those after-school television specials about One Kid Who Dared to Make a Difference.

On Broadway, Tracy's dance guru is a cool black kid named Seaweed. In the movie, Seaweed has shellacked hair and speaks like Stepin Fetchit. His mother is a Big Mama named "Motormouth Maybelle" who speaks entirely in rhyming couplets. Seaweed begins an interracial romance with the sweet but dumb Penny Pingleton. But when she is ripped from his arms by a psychiatrist toting a hypno-disc, she turns into Natalie Wood in *Splendor in the Grass*, hysterically shrieking Seaweed's name in a hilarious and merciless parody of every conceivable piety one can imagine.

Perhaps the most quietly vicious aspect of *Hairspray* is its view of its heroine, Tracy Turnblad. The ease with which this obese girl gets on television and wins the hunk is intentionally ludicrous—because, of course, girls like Tracy don't appear on television dance shows and don't date the hunky guy.

Waters's subversive vision in *Hairspray* mostly sailed over the heads of its viewers. Even the casting of the drag queen Divine as Tracy's mother didn't faze its mainstream audience, who probably didn't know that Divine was actually a man. The movie seemed to go down as easily as the after-school specials it was making fun of.

But what we now get on Broadway is the after-school special straight, no chaser. Tracy strikes a blow for fat people everywhere, and even gets her mother (played by another drag queen, Harvey Fierstein) to come out of her own obese shell. She and the kids are rallied to the cause of integrating the "Corny Collins Show" when Motormouth Maybelle sings a civil rights anthem called "I Know Where I've Been." Even Penny and Seaweed end up happily together, with Penny announcing proudly that she is now "a checkerboard chick."

You could say that the strange journey of John Waters from the depths of the American demimonde to the towering heights of American feel-good self-help is in some ways the story of American popular culture these past thirty years. But the real irony is that the Broadway *Hairspray* is a vastly more accomplished work of popular art than anything Waters ever created on his own. His younger self would have loathed it. But that's showbiz. ♦

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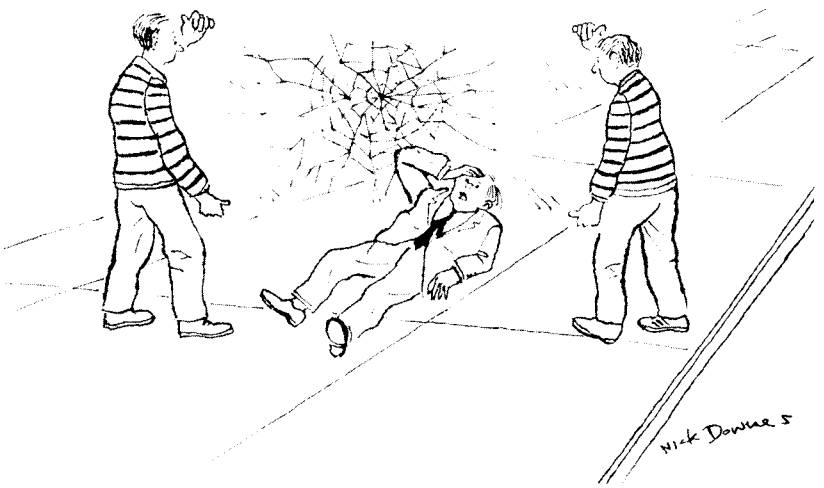

"I'm sorry–I thought you were a mime act!"

Books in Brief

***Hotel Kid* by Stephen Lewis (Paul Dry, 214 pp., $22.95).** Stephen Lewis's atmospheric memoir inevitably calls to mind another Manhattan hotel kid: Eloise, the tyke who lived at the Plaza in the series of children's books by Kay Thompson. But the similarity is only residential. Eloise was a guest. Lewis, whose father was head innkeeper of New York's Hotel Taft, was plugged into management. Lewis grew up during the palmy 1930s days of a Times Square hotel that boasted 2,000 rooms. (When it turned out that the actual room count was 1,437, his father explained the differential was due to "advertising.") The boy was in touch with the infrastructure from bellmen to the complaint department. His meals were delivered by room service, and his nanny was a chambermaid. This ambience could get claustrophobic, since Times Square, obviously, was off limits as a playground.

Lewis's mother was well adjusted to life as a hotel shut-in, but she felt that Lewis and his younger brother were in need of male "role models" from the outside world. So she called Columbia University for a tutor, who turned out to be Robert Lax, before he achieved legendary status as a poet. With Lax came his college roommate, Thomas Merton, en route to becoming a Trappist monk. Lax and Merton were more interested in pondering metaphysics than in teaching their charge manly skills like how to play catch. They left Stephen "as far from the mainstream as ever." But the hotel itself made a memorable impression. In *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton recalls Lax "living at the Hotel Taft, tutoring the children of the manager, and having access to an ice box full of cold chicken at all hours of the day and night."

The Lewises made another stab at giving their sons a more normal boyhood by renting a house in suburban New Rochelle. The outcome was reminiscent of Bruce Jay Friedman's novel *Stern*, in which a city family moves to the suburbs only to find that their offspring is afraid of grass.

The period covered in *Hotel Kid* is a frozen moment of the Big Band era, a snap shot of the Depression, and the last successful stand of the grand hotels. A three-course lunch in the coffee shop was 35 cents, and downstairs in the Taft Grill the house band led by Vincent Lopez played dance tunes. By the end of the era, World War II had unleashed massive social change, including the investment capital needed for heavy construction. This was bad news for the Taft. It was gutted and cannibalized into a boutique hotel attached to a condo.

At the close of the book, Lewis recounts a visit he paid to the old hotel during its demolition. *Hotel Kid* has breathed so much life into the place that its extinction achieves a human poignance.

—Martin Levin

***Firehouse* by David Halberstam (Hyperion, 201 pp., $22.95).** New York City's firefighters became national heroes when 343 of them died trying to help others escape the World Trade Center on September 11. But the real life lived by firemen remains a mystery. "People think they know what we do, but they don't," a FDNY veteran tells David Halberstam, whose *Firehouse* is a remarkable study of a tightly knit world and the impact September 11 had upon it.

In profiling the 13 men of a Manhattan firehouse who were on duty that morning (12 of whom perished), Halberstam reveals the tradition, history, family, and honor pulsing through the firehouse. The FDNY family is overwhelmingly male and heavily Irish Catholic: "It is almost as if there is a certain DNA strand found in firefighting families," writes Halberstam, "where the men are pulled toward the job because their fathers and uncles were firemen."

In addition to weaving into the drama the stories of colleagues, wives, parents, and brothers, Halberstam notes the firehouse resistance to outside "meddling." Before September 11, resistance to affirmative action got firefighters labeled unheroic and reactionary. Halberstam sympathetically shows that firefighters are neither gods nor gremlins but human beings molded by a complex web of deeply rooted institutions.

—Frederick R. Lynch

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"If Iraq came across the Jordan River, I would grab a rifle and get in the trench and fight and die."
—Bill Clinton, on defending Israel, July 29, 2002

The Book of Clinton

1 Dawn rose early and bright over the fields of Abraham. To the east lay the tribes of the Philistines; down in the valley the Israelites prepared for war, led by their mighty leader, Clintonus Maccabee.

2 The Philistines were wroth, as their mighty champion, Goliath, prepared them for battle, and ready to lay waste to their enemies the Hebrews.

3 The Israelites were filled with trepidation, for on this morning of their climactic confrontation, their great general Clintonus was late. He had summoned them to this war months earlier, declaring, "I shall fight and die for you. I shall stand with you, Hadassah, B'nai B'rith, AIPAC, and all the other great donor tribes of my party!"

4 But as the Philistines marched upon Israel, Clintonus had made himself scarce. He had initiated what he called Operation Political Viability, enrolling in Yeshiva Oxford, and declaring unto his people: "Have I not a deferment? For am I not a Rhodesenberg Scholar?"

5 On the morning of the battle, the Rabbis dragged him from his bed, crying, "Lead us, Clintonus, for thou art the man from Hope!" And Clintonus, seeing that the Israelite army was a co-ed one, agreed. And summoning his people, he sought to inspire them, and so boost his approval ratings. His address—the "It depends on what the definition of 'fight' is" speech—still rings in the hallowed memory of the Jewish people.

6 "I am with you," he declared to the Israelites. "For have I not known many of your women? And especially the young and big haired ones! But I am also with you," he shouted to the Philistines, who were just then charging down the valley with spear and sword. "I reject the false choices of Jew and Philistine! I seek a third way!" And with that Clintonus bit his lip and the peoples were moved.

7 "Clintonus!" Goliath bellowed. "I sense you feel my pain, and understand that my belligerence is an attempt to overcompensate for the trauma of growing up in a dysfunctional family!"

8 "I too was an enabler!" Clintonus responded. "In fact, though not many know it, both my parents were Philistines," which was not strictly true, for his father had been a Fellatian and his mother from the tribe of Mogen David.

9 "Can we not solve our problems with a targeted tax credit?" Goliath beseeched.

10 Clintonus allowed his chin to quiver. And the Israelites and the Philistines didst dance in the street. And many exposed their thongs, and so peace was restored to the land of milk and honey.

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Mexican Gridlock

Stephen Haber is the Peter and Helen Bing Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and a professor of political science and history at Stanford University.

The electoral victory of Vicente Fox in July 2000 ended the Institutional Revolutionary Party's (PRI) seven-decade monopoly of power. Fox promised dramatic increases in educational spending, tax reform, an end to government corruption and the Chiapas rebellion, an immigration agreement with the United States, and economic growth of 7 percent a year. Two years into the Fox presidency, virtually all those promises remain unfulfilled.

Fox's inability to make good on his campaign promises has not been for lack of trying. Rather, his reforms have either been scuttled or made toothless in Congress. Fox's sweeping tax reform was turned into a surtax on restaurant meals and hotel charges. His indigenous rights bill was so watered down that the Chiapas rebels rejected it. Congress even rejected Fox's request to travel to the United States in the fall of 2001, an act designed to embarrass him. Fox's only legislative victory was the passage of a Freedom of Information Act that opens up the files of Mexico's government to the citizenry.

Fox's legislative failures have surprised the Mexican public. From 1929 until 1997, when the PRI controlled the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies (Mexico's lower house), and the presidency, Congress simply rubber-stamped presidential proposals.

Now Mexico has three major parties: the conservative National Action Party (PAN); the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD); and the ideologically amorphous PRI. No party has a majority in either house of Congress. Given the differences and long-term strategies of each party, it is virtually impossible to form coalitions. The PRI wants to recapture the presidency in 2006 and thus refuses to form a coalition with the PAN (Fox's party). The PRD—ideologically opposed to the PAN—also refuses to form a coalition. Although the PRI and the PRD can form coalitions, their purpose is to block everything that Fox proposes.

This situation is unlikely to change. The two fundamental problems are that, first, Mexico's electoral laws specify that two-thirds of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies represent winner-take-all districts (the candidate with the most votes in the district wins the seat). The seats in the other third are allocated by proportional representation (parties are allocated seats based on their percentage of the total vote). In this system, voters do not "waste" votes by voting for third-party candidates: parties win seats via the proportional voting rules even if they lose in every individual district. Mexico is therefore unlikely to converge on a two-party system. Second, Mexico's electoral laws specify that senators and deputies may not run for immediate reelection, pegging their future not to their performance as representatives but to their performance as loyal members of their party (which determines whether they can be placed on the list of candidates for a proportional seat).

Thus even with congressional elections next year, it is unlikely that Fox will be able to form effective coalitions; it is therefore unlikely that he will have any more success in the next four years than he has had in the last two.

— Stephen Haber

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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